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Dedicated, by Permission, to
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

PROLEGOMENA

To BELL's Edition of

SHAKSPERE's WORKS,

CONTAINING

The Conclusion of Mr. STEEVENS's Remarks on the Entries of
the Stationers-Company.

An Attempt to ascertain the ORDER in which the Plays attributed
to SHAKSPERE were written.

Part of a List of Ancient Translations from Classick Authors.

EMBELLISHMENT.

Portrait of Mr. GARRICK, finely engraved by Cook, after the
original Picture by Dance, in the Collection of Lord Mansfield.

London: Sold by the Proprietor, BRITISH-LIBRARY, Strand.

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.

To the PUBLIC.

THIS Work is intended to supercede the necessity for any other Edition whatever, as it will be calculated to gratify every class of Readers.

The Plan is to print each Play, *singly*, and *entire*, from the last revisions of Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, and GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq. &c. with *their Characters* of the Play, and *the Origin of the Fable*, as an introductory Preface to each Play.

The Plays to be printed by Mess. FRYS and COUCHMAN, on *two sorts of paper*; the best of which will be *superfine writing-post quality*, on a new *Bourgeois Letter*, cast and *delicately dressed* on purpose.

- The First Number is The TEMPEST, beautifully embellished.
The Second Number is MEASURE for MEASURE, ditto.
The Third Number is MACBETH, ditto.
The Fourth Number is MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, ditto.
The Fifth Number is HAMLET, beautifully embellished.
The Sixth Number is ROMEO and JULIET, ditto.
The Seventh Number is the MERCHANT of VENICE, ditto.
The Eighth Number is the MERRY WIVES of WINDSOR, ditto.
The Ninth Number is JULIUS CÆSAR, ditto.
The Tenth Number is MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM, ditto.
The Eleventh Number is TITUS ANDRONICUS, ditto.
The Twelfth Number is TWELFTH-NIGHT, ditto.
The Thirteenth Number is LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, ditto.
The Fourteenth Number is TIMON of ATHENS, ditto.
The Fifteenth Number is TROILUS and CRESSIDA, ditto.
The Sixteenth Number is AS YOU LIKE IT, ditto.
The Seventeenth Number is OTHELLO, ditto.
The Eighteenth Number is the COMEDY of ERRORS, ditto.
The Nineteenth Number is KING HENRY V. ditto.
The Twentieth Number is KING LEAR, ditto.
The Twenty-First Number is KING HENRY IV. Part I. ditto.
The Twenty-Second Number is KING HENRY IV. Part II. do.
The Twenty-Third Numb. is the TAMING OF THE SHREW, do.
The Twenty-Fourth Number is CYMBELINE, ditto.
The Twenty-Fifth No. is ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, do.
The Twenty-Sixth Number is KING HENRY VI. Part I. ditto.
The Twenty-Seventh Number is KING HENRY VI. Part II. do.
The Twenty-Eighth Number is KING HENRY VI. Part III. do.
The Twenty-Ninth Number is KING RICHARD III. ditto.
The Thirtieth Number is KING JOHN, ditto.
The Thirty-First Number is KING HENRY VIII. ditto.
The Thirty-Second Number is KING RICHARD II. ditto.
Thirty-Third Number is The WINTER'S TALE, ditto.
Thirty-Fourth Number is TWO GENTLEMEN of VERONA, do.
The Thirty-Fifth Number is CORIOLANUS, ditto.
The Thirty-Sixth Number is ANTONY and CLEOPATRA, do.



N. Dance pinx.

Cook Sculp.

*Done from an original Picture in the possession of
the R.^t Hon.^{ble} Lord Mansfield.*

London Printed for J. Bell, British Library Strand, Dec^r 1st 1786..

had been already disposed of to proprietors, out of whose hands they could not be redeemed; or if Heminge and Condell were discerning friends to the reputation of their associate, conscious as they might have been that such pieces were his, they would have omitted them by design, as inferior to his other productions. From this inferiority, and from a cast of style occasionally different, nothing relative to their authenticity can, with exactness, be inferred; for, as Dr. Johnson very justly observes on a similar occasion, “There is little resemblance between the first works of Raphael and the last.” But could it even be proved, that these rejected pieces were not among the earliest effusions of Shakspeare, such proof would by no means affect their authenticity, as both *Dryden* and *Rowe*, after having written their best plays, are known to have produced others, which reflect a very considerable degree of honour on their memory.

It has hitherto been usual to represent the ancient quartos of our author as by far more incorrect than those of his contemporaries; but I fear that this representation has been continued by many of us, with a design to magnify our own services, rather than to exhibit a true state of the question. The reason why we have discovered a greater proportion of errors in the former than in the latter, is, because we have sought after them with a greater degree of diligence; for let it be remembered, that it was no more the practice of other writers than of Shakspeare, to correct the press for themselves. Ben Jonson only (who,

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being

being versed in the learned languages, had been taught the value of accuracy) appears to have superintended the publication of his own dramatick pieces; but were those of Lily, Chapman, Marlow, or the Heywoods, to be revised with equal industry, an editor would meet with as frequent opportunities for the exertion of his critical abilities, as in these quartos, which have been so repeatedly censured by those who never took the pains to collate them, or justify the many valuable readings they contain; for when the character of them which we have handed down, was originally given, among typographical blunders, &c. were enumerated all terms and expressions which were not strictly grammatical, or not easily understood. As yet we had employed in our attempts at explanation only such materials as casual reading had supplied; but how much more is requisite for the complete explanation of an early writer, the last edition of the *Canterbury Tales of Chaucer* may prove a sufficient witness; a work which, in respect of accuracy and learning, is without a rival, at least in any commentary on an English poet. The reader will forgive me, if I desert my subject for a moment, while I express an ardent wish, that the same editor may find leisure and inclination to afford us the means of reading the other works of the father of our poetry, with advantages which we cannot derive from the efforts of those who have less deeply and successfully penetrated into the recesses of ancient Italian, French, and English literature.—An author has received the

highest mark of distinction, when he has engaged the services of such a commentator.

The reader may, perhaps, be desirous to know, by whom these quartos of Shakspeare are supposed to have been sent into the world. To such a curiosity no very adequate gratification can be afforded; but yet it may be observed, that as these elder copies possess many advantages over those in the subsequent folio, we should decide perversely were we to pronounce them spurious. They were, in all probability, issued out by some performer, who, deriving no benefit from the theatre, except his salary, was uninterested in that retention of copies, which was the chief concern of our ancient managers. We may suppose too, that there was nothing criminal in his proceeding; as some of the persons whose names appear before these publications, are known to have filled the highest offices in the company of Stationers with reputation, bequeathing legacies of considerable value to it at their decease. Neither do I discover why the first manuscripts, delivered by so careless a writer to the actors, should prove less correct than those which he happened to leave behind him, unprepared for the press, in the possession of the same fraternity. On the contrary, after his plays had past for twenty years through the hands of a succession of ignorant transcribers, they were more likely to become maimed and corrupted, than when they were printed from papers less remote from the originals. It is true, that *Heminge* and *Condell* have called these

copies *surreptitious*; but this was probably said with a view to enhance the value of their own impression, as well as to revenge themselves, as far as possible, on those who had in part anticipated the publication of works from which they expected considerable gleanings of advantage, after their first harvest on the stage was over.—I mean to except from this general character of the quartos, the author's rough draughts of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Romeo and Juliet*; together with the play of *King Henry V.* and the two parts of *King Henry VI.* for these latter carry all the marks of having been imperfectly taken down by the ear, without any assistance from the originals belonging to the playhouses in which they were first represented.

A preceding table of those ancient copies of the plays of Shakspeare, which his commentators have really met with and consulted, if compared with the earliest of these entries on the books already mentioned, may tempt the reader to suppose that some quartos have not yet been found, from which future assistance may be derived. But I fear that no such resources remain; as it seems to have been the practice of the numerous theatres in the time of Shakspeare, to cause some Bookseller to make immediate entries of their new pieces, as a security against the encroachments of their rivals, who always considered themselves as justified in the exhibition of such dramas as had been enfranchised by the press. Imperfect copies, but for these precautions, might have been more frequently

frequently obtained from the repetition of hungry actors, invited for that purpose to a tavern; or something like a play might have been collected by attentive auditors, who made it their business to attend succeeding representations with a like design*. By these means, without any intent of hasty publication, one company of players was studious to prevent the trespasses of another†. Nor did their policy conclude here; for I have not unfrequently met with registers of both tragedies and comedies, of which the titles were at some other time to be declared. Thus, July 26, 1576, John Hunter enters "A new and pleasant comedie or plaie, after the manner of Common Condycyons;" and one Fielder, in Sept 1587, prefers his right to four others, "Whereof he will bring the titles." "The famous Tragedy of the Rich Jewe of Malta," by Christopher Marlow, is ascertained to be the property of Nich. Ling and Tho. Millington, in May 1594, though it was not printed by Nich. Vavasour till 1633, as Tho. Heywood, who wrote the preface to it, informs us. In this manner the contending theatres (seventeen in

* See the notes of Mr. Collins and Mr. Malone at the end of the third part of K. Henry VI.

† From the year 1570 to the year 1629, when the play-house in White-Friars was finished, it appears that no less than seventeen theatres had been built.

number*) were prepared to assert a priority of title to any copies of dramattick performances; and thus were they assisted by our ancient Stationers, who strengthened every claim of literary property, by entries secured in a manner which was then supposed to be obligatory and legal.

I may add, that the difficulty of procuring licences was another reason why some theatrical publications were retarded, and others entirely suppressed. As we cannot now discover the motives which influenced the conduct of former Lord Chamberlains and Bishops, who

* Mr. Dodsley, in a note to the preface to his collection of *Old Plays*, has the following enumeration of the different theatres which had been built between the years 1570 and 1629, when that in White-Friars was finished:—"St. Paul's Singing-School. The Globe on the Bank-Side, Southwark. The Swan and the Hope there. The Fortune, between Whitecross-Street and Golding-Lane, which Maitland tells us was the first playhouse erected in London. The Red-Bull in St. John's-Street. The Cross-Keys in Gracechurch-Street. The Tuns. The Theater. The Curtain. The Nursery in Barbican. One in Black-Friars. One in White-Friars. One in Salisbury-Court. The Cockpit, and the Phoenix in Drury-Lane."

To this account I may subjoin, that the *Fortune* (as appears from the following advertisement in the *Mercurius Politicus*, Tuesday, Feb. 14, to Tuesday 21, 1661) must have been a place of considerable extent; and it is by no means improbable, that all the actors resided within its precincts.

who stopped the sale of several works, which, nevertheless, have escaped into the world, and appear to be of the most innocent nature, we may be tempted to regard their severity as rather dictated by jealousy and caprice, than by judgment and impartiality. See a note to my *Advertisement* which follows Dr. Johnson's Preface.

The publick is now in possession of as accurate an account of the dates, &c. of Shakspeare's works, as perhaps will ever be compiled. This was by far the most irksome part of my undertaking, though facilitated, as much as possible, by the kindness of Mr. Longman, of Paternoster-Row, who readily furnished me with the three earliest volumes of the records of

precincts. "The *Fortune* playhouse, situate between Whitecross-Street and Golding-Lane, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, with the ground thereunto belonging, is to be lett to be built upon; where 23 tenements may be erected, with gardens; and a street may be cut through for the better accommodation of the buildings." The *Curtain* was in Shoreditch, a part of which district still retains the name of *The Curtain*. The original sign hung out at this theatre was the painting of a *striped Curtain*. We learn, likewise, from Prynne's *Histriomastix*, that in the time of Queen Elizabeth there were two other playhouses, the one called the *Bell-Savage* (situated, very probably, on Ludgate-Hill), the other in Bishopsgate-Street: and Taylor, the Water-Poet, in "The true Cause of the Watermen's Suit concerning Players, 1613," mentions another theatre called the *Rose*.

the Stationers-Company, together with accommodations which rendered the perusal of them convenient to me, though troublesome to himself.

Mr. Malone has attempted, in the following pages, to ascertain the chronological order in which the plays of Shakspeare were written. By the aid of the registers at Stationers-Hall, and such internal evidence as the pieces themselves supply, he has so happily accomplished his undertaking, that he only leaves me the power to thank him for an arrangement which I profess my inability either to dispute or to improve.

STEEVENS.

AN ATTEMPT
TO ASCERTAIN
THE ORDER
IN WHICH

The PLAYS *attributed to* SHAKSPERE
WERE WRITTEN.

———*Primusque per avia campi
Usque procul (necdum totas lux moverat umbras),
Nescio quid visu dubium, incertumque moveri,
Corporaque ire videt.* STATIUS.

Trattando l'ombre come cosa saldo. DANTE.

EVERY circumstance that relates to those persons whose writings we admire, interests our curiosity. The time and place of their birth, their education and gradual attainments, the dates of their productions, and the reception they severally met with, their habits of life, their private friendships, and even their external form, are all points, which, how little soever they

they may have been adverted to by their contemporaries, strongly engage the attention of posterity: Not satisfied with receiving the aggregated wisdom of ages as a free gift, we visit the mansions where our instructors are said to have resided, we contemplate with pleasure the trees under whose shade they once reposed, and wish to see and to converse with those sages, whose labours have added strength to virtue, and efficacy to truth.

Shakspeare, above all writers, since the days of Homer, has excited this curiosity in the highest degree; as, perhaps, no poet of any nation was ever more idolized by his countrymen. An ardent desire to understand and explain his works, has, to the honour of the present age, so much increased within these last thirty years, that more has been done towards their elucidation, during that period*, than, perhaps, in a century before. All the ancient copies of his plays, hitherto discovered, have been collated with the most scrupulous accuracy. The meanest books have been carefully examined, only because they were of the age in which he lived, and might, happily, throw a light on some forgotten custom, or obsolete phraseology: and, this object being still kept in view, the toil of wading through *all such reading as was never read*, has been cheerfully endured, because

* Within the period here mentioned, the commentaries of Warburton, Edwards, Heath, Johnson, Tyrwhitt, Farmer, and Steevens, have been published.

no labour was thought too great, that might enable us to add one new laurel to the father of our drama. Almost every circumstance that tradition or history has preserved, relative to him or his works, has been investigated, and laid before the publick; and the avidity with which all communications of this kind have been received, sufficiently proves, that the time expended in the pursuit has not been wholly mis-employed.

However, after the most diligent inquiries, very few particulars have been recovered, respecting his private life, or literary history: and while it has been the endeavour of all his editors and commentators, to illustrate his obscurities, and to regulate and correct his text, no attempt has been made to trace the progress and order of his plays. Yet, surely, it is no incurious speculation, to mark the gradations * by which

* It is not pretended, that a regular scale of gradual improvement is here presented to the publick; or that, if even Shakspeare himself had left us a chronological list of his dramas, it would exhibit such a scale. All that is meant is, that, as his knowledge increased, and as he became more conversant with the stage and with life, his performances, *in general*, were written more happily, and with greater art; or (to use the words of Dr. Johnson), "*that, however favoured by nature, he could only impart what he had learned, and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better as he knew it more, and*

instruct

which he rose from mediocrity to the summit of excellence ; from artless and uninteresting dialogues, to those unparalleled compositions, which have rendered him the delight and wonder of successive ages.

The

instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed." Of this opinion also was Mr. Pope. "*It must be observed (says he), that when his performances had merited the protection of his prince, and when the encouragement of the court had succeeded to that of the town, the works of his riper years are manifestly raised above those of his former.— And I make no doubt that this observation would be found true in every instance, were but editions extant from which we might learn the exact time when every piece was composed, and whether writ for the town or the court.*" From the following lines it appears, that Dryden also thought that our author's most imperfect plays were his earliest dramattick compositions :

" Your Ben and Fletcher, in their first young flight,
 " Did no *Volpone*, no *Arbaces* write ;
 " But hopp'd about, and short excursions made
 " From bough to bough, as if they were afraid ;
 " And each were guilty of some *Slighted Maid*.
 " Shakspeare's own muse his *Pericles* first bore,
 " *The Prince of Tyre* was elder than *The Moor*.
 " 'Tis miracle to see a first good play ;
 " All hawthorns do not bloom on Christmas-day.
 " A slender poet must have time to grow,
 " And spread and burnish as his brothers do :

" Who

The materials for ascertaining the order in which his plays were written, are indeed so few, that, it is to be feared, nothing very decisive can be produced on this subject. In the following attempt to trace the progress of his dramattick art, probability alone is pretended to. The silence and inaccuracy of those persons, who, after his death, had the revisal of his papers, will, perhaps, for ever prevent our attaining

“ Who still looks lean, sure with some p— is curst,
 “ But no man can be *Falstaff* fat at first.”

Prologue to the tragedy of *Circe*.

The plays which Shakspeare produced before the year 1600, are known, and are about eighteen in number. The rest of his dramas, we may conclude, were composed between that year and the time of his retiring to the country. It is incumbent on those, who differ in opinion from the great authorities above-mentioned, who think with Rowe, that “ *we are not to look for his beginning in his least perfect works,*” it is incumbent, I say, on those persons, to enumerate in the former class, that is, among the plays produced before 1600, compositions of equal merit with *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, and *Twelfth Night*, which we have reason to believe were all written in the latter period; and among his late performances, that is, among the plays which are supposed to have appeared after the year 1600, to point out five pieces, as hasty, indigested, and uninteresting, as *the first and third parts of K. Henry VI.* *Love's Labour Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which, we know, were among his earlier works,

to any thing like proof on this head. Little then remains, but to collect into one view, from his several dramas, and from the ancient tracts in which they are mentioned, or alluded to, all the circumstances that can throw any light on this new and curious inquiry. From these circumstances, and from the entries in the books of the Stationers-Company, extracted and now first published by Mr. Steevens (to whom every admirer of Shakspeare has the highest obligations), it is probable, that the plays attributed to our author were written nearly in the following succession; which, though it cannot at this day be ascertained to be their true order, may yet be considered as approaching nearer to it, than any which has been observed in the various editions of his works. The *rejected* pieces are here enumerated with the rest, but no opinion is thereby meant to be given concerning their authenticity.

Of the nineteen genuine plays which were not printed in our author's life-time*, the majority were, I believe,

* They are, *King Henry VI. Part I. The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Winter's Tale, The Comedy of Errors, King John, All's Well that Ends Well, As You Like It, King Henry VIII. Measure for Measure, Cymbeline, Macbeth, The Taming of the Shrew, Julius Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, Othello, The Tempest, and Twelfth-Night.* Of these nineteen plays, four, viz. *The First Part of K. Henry VI. King John, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, and The Comedy of Errors,* were certainly early compositions, and are an exception to the general truth of this observation. Perhaps, the ill success of the two latter, was the occasion that

lieve, late compositions*. The following arrangement is in some measure formed on this idea. Two reasons may be assigned, why Shakspeare's late performances were not published till after his death.

1. If we suppose him to have written for the stage during a period of twenty years, those pieces which were produced in the latter part of that period, were less likely to pass through the press in his life-time, as the curiosity of the publick had not been so long engaged by them, as by his early compositions. 2. From the time that Shakspeare had the superintendence

that they were not printed so soon as his other early performances. Two others, viz. *The Winter's Tale*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*, though supposed to have been early productions, were, it must be acknowledged, not published in Shakspeare's life-time; but for the dates of these we rely only on conjecture.

* This supposition is strongly confirmed by *Meres's* list of our author's plays, in 1598. From that list, and from other circumstances, we learn, that of the sixteen genuine plays which were printed in Shakspeare's life-time, thirteen were written before the end of the year 1600.—The sixteen plays published in our author's life-time, are — *Love's Labour Lost*. *The Second and Third Parts of K. Henry VI.* *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *K. Richard II.* *K. Richard III.* *The First Part of K. Henry IV.* *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Second Part of K. Henry IV.* *K. Henry V.* *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *K. Lear*.

of a playhouse, that is, from the year 1603*, when he and several others obtained a licence from King James to exhibit comedies, tragedies, histories, &c. at the Globe-Theatre, and elsewhere, it became strongly his interest to preserve those pieces unpublished, which were composed between that year and the time of his retiring to the country; manuscript plays being then the great support of every theatre. Nor were the plays which he wrote after he became a manager, so likely to get abroad, being confined to his own theatre, as his former productions, which probably had been acted on many different stages, and of consequence afforded the players at the several houses, where they were exhibited, an easy opportunity of making out copies from the separate parts transcribed for their use, and of selling such copies to

* None of the plays which in the ensuing list are supposed to have been written subsequently to this year, were printed till after the author's death, except *K. Lear*, the publication of which was probably hastened by that of the old play with the same title, in 1605.—The copy of *Troilus and Cressida*, which seems to have been composed the year before K. James granted a licence to the company at the Globe-Theatre, appears to have been obtained by some uncommon artifice. “Thank fortune (says the Editor) for the *scape* it hath made amongst you; since, by the grand possessors' wills, I believe, you should have pray'd for them, rather than been pray'd.”—By the *grand possessors*, Shakspeare and the other managers of the Globe-Theatre, were clearly intended.

Printers ;

Printers; by which means, there is great reason to believe, that they were submitted to the press, without the consent of the author.

1. <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	_____	1589
2. LOVE'S LABOUR LOST	_____	1591
3. FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI.		1591
4. SECOND PART OF KING HENRY VI.		1592
5. THIRD PART OF KING HENRY VI.	—	1592
6. THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA	—	1593
7. THE WINTER'S TALE	_____	1594
8. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	—	1595
9. ROMEO AND JULIET	_____	1595
10. THE COMEDY OF ERRORS	_____	1596
11. HAMLET	_____	1596
12. KING JOHN	_____	1596
13. KING RICHARD II.	_____	1597
14. KING RICHARD III.	_____	1597
15. FIRST PART OF KING HENRY IV.		1597
16. THE MERCHANT OF VENICE	_____	1598
17. ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL	_____	1598
18. SECOND PART OF KING HENRY IV.		1598
19. KING HENRY V.	_____	1599
20. MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING,	_____	1600
21. AS YOU LIKE IT.	_____	1600
22. MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR	_____	1601
23. KING HENRY VIII.	_____	1601
24. TROILUS AND CRESSIDA	_____	1602
25. MEASURE FOR MEASURE	_____	1603
Cc iij		26. CYMBELINE

26. CYMBELINE	—————	—————	1604
27. KING LEAR	—————	—————	1605
28. MACBETH	—————	—————	1606
29. THE TAMING OF THE SHREW	—————	—————	1606
30. JULIUS CÆSAR	—————	—————	1607
31. ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA	—————	—————	1608
32. CORIOLANUS	—————	—————	1609
33. TIMON OF ATHENS	—————	—————	1610
34. OTHELLO,	—————	—————	1611
35. THE TEMPEST	—————	—————	1612
36. TWELFTH NIGHT	—————	—————	1614

1. *TITUS ANDRONICUS*, 1589.

In what year our author began to write for the stage, or which was his first performance, has not been hitherto ascertained. And indeed, we have so few lights to direct our inquiries, that any speculation on this subject may appear an idle expence of time. But the method which has been already marked out, requires that such facts should be mentioned as may serve in any manner to elucidate these points.

Shakspeare was born on the 23d of April 1564, and was probably married in, or before, September 1582, his eldest daughter, Susannah, having been baptized on the 26th of May 1583. At what time he left Warwickshire, or was first employed in the play-house, tradition does not inform us. However, as his son Samuel, and his daughter Judith, were baptized at
Stratford,

Stratford, February 2, 1584-5, we may presume that he had not left the country at that time.

He could not have wanted an easy introduction to the theatre; for Thomas Greene*, a celebrated comedian was his townsman, perhaps his relation, and Michael

* "There was not (says Heywood in his preface to *Greene's Tu quoque*, a comedy) an actor of his nature in his time, of better ability in the performance of what he undertook, more applauded by the audience, of greater grace at the court, or of more general love in the city." The birth-place of Thomas Greene is ascertained by the following lines, which he speaks in one of the old comedies, in the character of a clown:

" I prattled poesie in my nurse's arms,
" And, born were late our swan of Avon sung;
" In Avon's streams we both of us have lav'd,
" And both came out together."

Chetwood quotes this passage, in his *British Theatre*, from the comedy of the *Two Maids of Moreclack*; but no such passage is there to be found. He deserves but little credit, having certainly forged many of his dates; however, he probably met these lines in some ancient play, though he forgot the name of the piece from which he transcribed them. Greene was a writer as well as an actor. There are some verses of his prefixed to a collection of Drayton's poems, published in the year 1613. He was, perhaps, a kinsman of Shakspeare's. In the register of the parish of Stratford, Thomas Greene, alias Shakspeare, is said to have been buried March 6, 1589: He might have been the actor's father.

Drayton

Drayton was likewise born in Warwickshire; the latter was nearly of his own age; and both were in some degree of reputation soon after the year 1590. If I were to indulge a conjecture, I should name the middle of the year 1591, as the æra when our author commenced a writer for the stage; at which time he was somewhat more than twenty-seven years old. The reasons that induce me to fix on that period are these. In Webbe's *Discourse of English Poetry*, published in 1586, we meet with the names of most of the celebrated poets of that time; particularly those of George Whetstone* and Antony Munday†, who
were

* The author of *Promos and Cassandra*, a play which furnished Shakspeare with the fable of *Measure for Measure*.

† This poet is mentioned by Meres, in his *Wit's Treasury*, as an eminent comick writer, and the *best plotter* of his time. He seems to have been introduced under the name of Don Antonio Balladino, in a comedy that has been attributed to Ben Jonson, called *The Case is Altered*; and from the following passages in that piece appears to have been city-poet; whose business it was to compose an annual panegyrick on the Lord-Mayor, and to write verses for the pageants: an office which has been discontinued since the death of Elkanah Settle in 1722:

Onion. "Shall I request your name?"

Ant. My name is Antonio Balladino.

Oni. Balladino! You are not pageant-poet to the city of Milan, Sir, are you?

Ant.

were *dramatick* writers ; but we find no trace of our author, or of any of his works. Three years afterwards, Puttenham printed his *Art of English Poesy* ; and in that work also we look in vain for the name of Shakspeare*. Sir John Harrington in his *Apologie for Poetry*,

Ant. I supply the place, Sir, when a worse cannot be had, Sir.—Did you see the last pageant I set forth?"

Afterwards Antonio, speaking of the plays he had writtten, says,

"Let me have good ground—no matter for the pen ; *the plot* shall carry it.

Oni. Indeed that's right ; *you are in print, already, for*
THE BEST PLOTTER.

Ant. Ay ; I might as well have been put in for a dumb shew too."

It is evident, that this poet is here intended to be ridiculed by Ben Jonson ; but he might, notwithstanding, have been deservedly eminent. That malignity, which endeavoured to tear a wreath from the brow of Shakspeare, would certainly not spare inferior writers.

*The thirty-first chapter of the first book of Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy* is thus entitled : "Who in any age have bene the most commended writers in our English Poesie, and the author's censure given upon them."

After having enumerated several authors who were then celebrated for various kinds of composition, he gives this succinct account of those who had written for the stage :
"Of the latter sort I thinke thus ;—that for tragedie, the Lord
Buckhurst

Poetry, prefixed to the *Translation of Ariosto* (which was entered in the Stationers' books, February 26, 1590-1, in which year, it was printed), takes occasion to speak of the theatre, and mentions some of the celebrated dramas of that time; but says not a word of Shakspeare, or of any of his plays. If even *Love's Labour Lost* had then appeared, which was probably his first dramatick composition, is it imaginable, that Harrington should have mentioned the Cambridge *Pedantius*, and *The Play of the Cards* (which last, he tells us was a London comedy), and have passed by, unnoticed, the new prodigy of the dramatick world.

That Shakspeare had commenced a writer for the stage, and had even excited the jealousy of his contemporaries, before September 1592, is now decisively proved by a passage * extracted by Mr. Tyrwhitt from
Robert

Buckhurst and Maister Edward Ferrys, for such doings as I have sene of theirs, do deserve the hyest price; the Earl of Oxford and Maister Edwardes of her Majestie's Chappell, for comedie and enterlude."

* See Vol. VI. p. ult. where the passage is given at large. The paragraph which immediately follows that quoted by Mr. Tyrwhitt, though obscure, is worth transcribing, as it seems to allude to Shakspeare's country education, and to intimate, that he had not removed to London long before the year 1592.—After having mentioned a person who had newly appeared in the double capacity of actor and author, "one who is in his owne conceit the only
Shak-

Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Witte bought with a Million of Repentance**, in which there is an evident allusion to our author's name, as well as to one of his plays.

At what time soever he became acquainted with the theatre, we may presume that he had not composed his first play *long before it was acted*; for being early incumbered with a young family, and not in very affluent circumstances, it is improbable that he should have suffered it to lie in his closet, without endeavouring to derive some profit from it; and in the miserable state of the drama in those days, the meanest of his genuine plays must have been a valuable acquisition, and would hardly have been *refused* by any of the managers of our ancient theatres.

Titus Andronicus appears to have been *acted* before any other play attributed to Shakspeare; and therefore,
as

Shake-scene *in a country*," and exhorted his brother poets to seek *better maisters* than the players, Greene proceeds thus: *In this I might insert two more, that both have written against these buckram gentlemen [the players:] but let their owne worke serve to witnesse against their own wickednesse, if they persevere to maintaine any more such peasants. For other new-commers, I leave them to the mercie of these painted monsters, who, I doubt not, will drive the best-minded to despise them, &c.*" Greene's *Groatsworth of Witte*, &c. Sig. E. 4.

* This tract has no date, but was published after the author's death, agreeably to his dying request. It appears to have

as it has been admitted into all the editions of his works, whoever might have been the writer of it, it is entitled to the first place in this general list of his dramas. From Ben Jonson's induction to *Bartholomew-Fair*, 1614, we learn that *Andronicus* had been exhibited twenty-five or thirty years before, that is, at the lowest computation, in 1589 : or, taking a middle period (which is perhaps more just), in 1587. In our author's dedication of his *Venus and Adonis* to lord Southampton, in 1593, he tells us, as Mr. Steevens has observed, that that poem was "*the first heir of his invention :*" and if we were sure that it was published immediately, or soon, after it was written, it would at once prove *Titus Andronicus* not to be the production of Shakspeare, and nearly ascertain the time when he commenced a dramattick writer. But we do not know what interval might have elapsed between the composition and the publication of that poem. There is, indeed, a passage in the dedication already mentioned, which, if there were not such decisive evidence on the other side, might induce us to think that he had not written, in 1593, any piece of more dignity than a love-poem, or at least any on which he

have been written not long before his death ; for near the conclusion he says, "*Albeit weakness will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellow schollers about this citie will I direct these few insuing lines.*" He died, according to Dr. Gabriel Harvey's account, on the third of September 1592. *Additions by Oldys to Winstanley's Lives of the Poets*, MS.

himself

himself set a value. "If, says he to his noble patron, your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some *graver* labour."

"A booke, entitled a *Noble Roman History of Titus Andronicus*," (without any author's name) was entered at Stationers-Hall, February 9, 1593-4. This I suppose to have been the play, as it was printed in that year, and acted (according to Langbaine, who alone appears to have seen the first edition) by the servants of the earls of Pembroke, Derby, and Essex.

Mr. Pope thought that *Titus Andronicus* was not written by Shakspeare, because Ben Jonson spoke slightly of it while Shakspeare was yet living. This argument will not, perhaps, bear a very strict examination. If it were allowed to have any validity, many of our author's genuine productions must be excluded from his works: for Ben Jonson has ridiculed several of his dramas, in the same piece in which he has mentioned *Andronicus* with contempt.

It has been said that Francis Meres, who in 1598 enumerated this among our author's plays, might have been misled by a title-page; but we may presume that he was informed or deceived by some other means; for Shakspeare's name is *not* in the title-page of the edition printed in 1611, and therefore, we may conclude, was not in the title-page of that in 1594, of which the other was probably a re-impression.

However (notwithstanding the authority of Meres), the high antiquity of the piece, its entry on the Sta-

tioners' books without the name of the writer, the regularity of the versification, the dissimilitude of the style from that of those plays which are undoubtedly composed by our author, and the tradition mentioned by Ravenscroft *, at a period when some of his contemporaries had not been long dead †, render it highly improbable that this play should have been the composition of Shakspeare.

2. *LOVE'S LABOUR LOST*, 1591.

Shakspeare's natural disposition leading him, as Dr. Johnson has observed, to comedy, it is highly probable that his first dramatick production was of the comick kind; and of his comedies none appears to me to bear stronger marks of a first essay than *Love's Labour*

* "I have been told, by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it [*Titus Andronicus*] was not originally his, but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters." Ravenscroft's preface to *Titus Andronicus*, altered by him.

† John Lowin, and Joseph Taylor, two of the actors in Shakspeare's plays, were alive a few years before the Restoration of King Charles II. and Sir William D'Avenant, who had himself written for the stage in 1629 (thirteen years after the death of our author), did not die till April 1668. Ravenscroft's alteration of *Titus Andronicus*, was published in 1687.

Lost.

Lost. The frequent rhymes with which it abounds*, of which, in his early performances, he seems to have been extremely fond, its imperfect versification, its artless and desultory dialogue, and the irregularity of the composition, may be all urged in support of this conjecture.

Love's

* As this circumstance is more than once mentioned in the course of these observations, it may not be improper to add a few words on the subject of our author's metre. A mixture of rhymes with blank verse, in the same play, and sometimes in the same scene, is found in almost all his pieces, and is not peculiar to Shakspeare, being also found in the works of Jonson, and almost all our ancient dramattick writers. It is not, therefore, merely the use of rhymes, mingled with blank verse, but their *frequency*, that is here urged as a circumstance which seems to characterize and distinguish our poet's earliest performances. In the whole number of pieces which were written, antecedent to the year 1600, and which, for the sake of perspicuity, have been called his *early compositions*, more rhyming couplets are found than in all the plays composed subsequently to that year; which have been named his *late productions*. Whether in process of time Shakspeare grew weary of the bondage of rhyme, or whether he became convinced of its impropriety in a dramattick dialogue, his neglect of rhyming (for he never wholly disused it) seems to have been *gradual*. As, therefore, most of his early productions are characterized by the multitude of similar terminations which they exhibit, whenever, of two early pieces, it is doubtful which preceded the other, I am dis-

Love's Labour Lost was not entered at Stationers-Hall till the 23d of January 1606, but is mentioned by Francis Meres * in his *Wit's Treasury*, or *The Second Part of Wit's Commonwealth* †, in 1598, and was printed in that year. In the title-page of this edition (the oldest hitherto discovered), this piece is said to have been *presented before her highness* [Queen Elizabeth] *the last Christmas* [1597], and to be *newly cor-*

posed to believe (other proofs being wanting), that play, in which the greater number of rhymes is found, to have been first composed. This, however, must be acknowledged to be but a fallible criterion; for the *Three Parts of King Henry VI.* which appear to have been among our author's earliest compositions, do not abound in rhymes.

* This writer, to whose list of our author's plays we are so much indebted, appears, from the following passage of the work here mentioned, to have been personally acquainted with Shakspeare:

“As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lies in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakspeare. Witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugured *Sonnets* among his private friends, &c.” *Wit's Treasury*, p. 282. There is no edition of Shakspeare's *Sonnets*, now extant, of so early a date as 1598, when Meres's book was printed; so that we may conclude, he was one of those friends to whom they were privately recited, before their publication.

† This book was probably published in the latter-end of the year 1598; for it was not entered at Stationers-Hall till September in that year.

rected

rected and augmented : from which it should seem, that there had been a former impression.

Mr. Gildon, in his observations on *Love's Labour Lost*, says, "he cannot see why the author gave it this name."—The following lines exhibit the train of thoughts, which probably suggested to Shakspeare this title, as well as that which anciently was affixed to another of his comedies—*Love's Labour Won*.

"To be *in love* where scorn is bought with groans,
 "Coy looks with heart-sore sighs; one fading moment's mirth

"With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights :

"If haply *won*, perhaps a hapless gain ;

"If *lost*, why then a grievous *labour won*."

Two Gentlemen of Verona. Act. I. sc. i.

3. THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI. 1591.

The regular *First Part of King Henry VI.* was not published till 1623, at which time it was entered at Stationers-Hall by the printers of the earliest folio, under the name of *The Third Part of King Henry VI.* In one sense it might be called so; for *two* parts had appeared before. But considering the history of that reign, and the period of time it comprehends, it ought to have been called, what in fact it is, *The First Part of King Henry VI.* Why this *First Part* was not entered on the Stationers' books with the other two, it is impossible now to determine. That it was written before the *Second* and *Third Parts*, Dr. Johnson thinks,

Dd iij

appears

appears indubitably from the series of events. "It is apparent," he says, "that *The Second Part* begins where the former ends, and continues the series of transactions of which it pre-supposes the first part already known. This is a sufficient proof that the *Second* and *Third Parts* were not written without dependance on *The First*, though they were printed as containing a complete period of history."

I once thought differently from the learned commentator; imagining that *The First Part of King Henry VI.* was not written till after the two other parts. But on an attentive examination of these three plays, I have found sufficient reason to subscribe to Dr. Johnson's opinion.

This piece is supposed to have been produced in the year 1591, on the authority of Thomas Nashe, who in a tract, entitled, *Pierce Pennyless his Supplication to the Devil*, which was published in 1592*, expressly mentions one of the characters in it, who does not appear in the *Second or Third Part of King Henry VI.* nor, I believe, in any other play of that time. "How, says he, would it have joyed brave *Talbot*, the terror of the French†, to think that after he had
lain

* This was the first edition, for it was not entered on the Stationers' books before that year.

† Thus *Talbot* is described in *The First Part of King Henry VI.* Act I. sc. iii.

"Here, said they, is *the terror of the French.*"

Again,

lain two hundred years in his tomb, he should triumph again on the stage, and have his bones new embalmed, with the tears of ten thousand spectators at least (at several times), who, in the tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.”

4. } SECOND AND THIRD PARTS OF KING
5. } HENRY VI. 1592.

In a tract already mentioned, entitled *Greene's Groatsworth of Witte*, &c. which was written before the end of the year 1592, there is, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed *, a parody on a line in *The Third Part of King Henry VI.* and an allusion to the name of Shakspeare.

These two historical dramas were entered on the books of the Stationers-Company, March 12, 1593-4, but were not printed till the year 1600. In their second titles they are called—THE FIRST AND SECOND PARTS of the Contention of the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster; but in reality they are THE SECOND and THIRD PARTS of *King Henry VI.*

In the last chorus of *King Henry V.* Shakspeare alludes to the *Second Part*, perhaps to all the parts of *King Henry VI.* as popular performances, that had fre-

Again, in Act V. sc. i.

“Is Talbot slain, the Frenchmen's only scourge,
Your kingdom's terror?”—

* See vol. VI. p. ult.

quently

quently been exhibited on the stage; and expresses a hope, that *King Henry V.* may, *for their sake*, meet with a favourable reception; a plea, which he scarcely would have urged, if he had not been their author.

6. *THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA*, 1593.

This comedy was not entered on the books of the Stationers-Company till 1623, at which time it was first printed; but is mentioned by Meres in 1598, and bears strong internal marks of an early composition.

7. *THE WINTER'S TALE*, 1594.

The Winter's Tale was, *perhaps*, entered on the Stationers' books, May 22, 1594, under the name of *A Wynter Nyght's Pastime*; which might have been the same play. It is observable that Shakspeare has two other similar titles;—*Twelfth Night*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: and it appears that the titles of his plays were sometimes changed; thus, *All's Well that Ends Well*, we have reason to think, was called *Love's Labour Won*: and *Hamlet* was sometimes called *Hamlet's REVENGE*, sometimes *THE HISTORY of Hamlet*. However, it must not be concealed, that *The Winter's Tale* is not enumerated among our author's plays, by Meres, in 1598: a circumstance which, yet, is not decisive to shew that it was not then written; for neither is *Hamlet* nor *King Henry VI.* mentioned by him.

Greene's *Dorastus and Fawnia*, from which the plot of this play is borrowed, was published in 1588.

The

The Winter's Tale was acted at court in the beginning of the year 1613 *. It was not printed till 1623.

Mr. Walpole thinks, that this play was intended by Shakspeare as an indirect apology for Anne Boleyn ; and considers it as a Second Part to *K. Henry VIII* †. My respect for that very judicious and ingenious writer, the silence of Meres, and the circumstance of there not being one rhyming couplet throughout this piece, except in the chorus, make me doubt whether it ought not to be ascribed to the year 1601, or 1602, rather than that in which it is here placed.

8. *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT's DREAM*, 1595.

The poetry of this piece, glowing with all the warmth of a youthful and lively imagination, the many scenes that it contains of almost continual rhyme ‡, the poverty of the fable, and want of discrimination among the higher personages, dispose me to believe that it was one of our author's earliest attempts in comedy.

It seems to have been written, while the ridiculous competitions, prevalent amongst the histrionick tribe, were strongly impressed by novelty on his mind. He would naturally copy those manners first, with which he was first acquainted. The ambition of a theatrical candidate for applause he has happily ridiculed in

* MS. of the late Mr. Vertue.

† *Historick Doubts*.

‡ Ante, p. 294.

Bottom the Weaver. But among the more dignified persons of the drama we look in vain for any traits of character. The manners of Hippolita, *the Amazon*, are undistinguished from those of other females. Theseus, the associate of Hercules, is not engaged in any adventure worthy of his rank or reputation, nor is he in reality an agent throughout the play. Like *K. Henry VIII.* he goes out a Maying. He meets the lovers in perplexity, and makes no effort to promote their happiness; but when supernatural accidents have reconciled them, he joins their company, and concludes his day's entertainment by uttering some miserable puns at an interlude represented by a troop of clowns. Over the fairy part of the drama he cannot be supposed to have any influence. This part of the fable, indeed (at least as much of it as relates to the quarrels of Oberon and Titania), was not of our author's invention*.—Through the whole piece, the
more

* The learned editor of *Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, printed in 1775, observes in his introductory discourse (Vol. IV. p. 161.) that Pluto and Proserpine in the Merchant's Tale, appear to have been "the true progenitors of Shakspeare's *Oberon and Titania*." In a tract already quoted, *Greene's Groatsworth of Witte*, 1592, a player is introduced, who boasts of having performed the part of *The King of Fairies* with applause. Greene himself wrote a play, entitled *The Scottishe Historie of James the Fourthe, slaine at Floddon, intermixed with a pleasant Comedie presented by Oberon King of the Fairies*; which was entered at Stationers-Hall

more exalted characters are subservient to the interest of those beneath them. We laugh with Bottom and his fellows, but is a single passion agitated by the faint and childish solitudes of Hermia and Demetrius, of Helena and Lysander, those shadows of each other?—That a drama, of which the principal personages are thus insignificant, and the fable thus meagre and uninteresting, was one of our author's earliest compositions, does not, therefore, seem a very improbable conjecture; nor are the beauties with which it is embellished, inconsistent with this supposition; for the genius of Shakspeare, even in its minority, could embroider the coarsest materials with the brightest and most lasting colours.

A Midsummer Night's Dream was not entered at Stationers-Hall, till October 8, 1600, in which year it was printed; but is mentioned by Meres in 1598.

From the comedy of *Dr. Dodipoll* Mr. Steevens has quoted a line, which the author seems to have borrowed from Shakspeare :

Hall in 1594, and printed in 1598. Shakspeare, however, does not appear to have been indebted to this piece. The plan of it is shortly this, Bohan, a Scot, in consequence of being disgusted with the world, having retired to a tomb where he has fixed his dwelling, is met by *Aster Oberon*, king of the fairies, who entertains him with an antick or dance by his subjects. These two personages, after some conversation, determine to listen to a tragedy, which is acted before them, and to which they make a kind of chorus, by moralizing at the end of each act.

“ 'Twas

“ ’Twas I that led you through the painted meads,
 “ Where the light *fairies* danc’d upon the *flowers*,
 “ Hanging in ev’ry leaf an orient pearl.”

So, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*,

“ And hang a pearl in ev’ry cowslip’s ear.”

Again,

“ And that same dew, which sometimes on the buds
 “ Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
 “ Stood now within the pretty *flouret’s* eyes,
 “ Like tears,” &c.—

There is no earlier edition of the anonymous play in which the foregoing lines are found, than that in 1600; but *Dr. Dodipoll* is mentioned by Nashe, in his preface to *Gabriel Harvey’s Hunt is up*, printed in 1596. This, therefore, is another circumstance, that in some measure authorises the date here assigned to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

The passage in the fifth act, which, with some probability, has been thought to allude to the death of Spenser*, is not inconsistent with the early appearance of this comedy; for it might have been inserted between the time of the poet’s death, and the year 1600, when the play was published. And indeed, if the allusion was intended, the passage must have been

* “ The thrice three muses mourning for the death
 Of learning, late deceas’d in beggary.”

added in that interval; for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was certainly written in, or before, 1598; and Spenser, we are told by Sir James Ware (whose testimony with respect to this controverted point must have great weight), did not die till 1599: "others (he adds), have it *wrongly*, 1598 *." So careful a searcher into antiquity, who lived so near the time, is not likely to have been mistaken in a fact, concerning which he appears to have made particular inquiries.

* Preface to Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*. Dublin, fol. 1633. This treatise was written, according to Sir James Ware, in 1596. The testimony of that historian, relative to the time of Spenser's death, is confirmed by a fact related by Ben Jonson to Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, and recorded by that writer. When Spenser and his wife were forced in great distress to fly from their house, which was burnt in the Irish Rebellion, the Earl of Essex sent him twenty pieces; but he refused them; telling the person that brought them, he was sure he had no time to spend them. He died soon after, according to Ben Jonson's account, in King-Street, Dublin. Lord Essex was not in Ireland in 1598, and was there from April to September in the following year.—If Spenser had died in London, as Cambden says he did, his death would probably have been mentioned by Rowland Whyte, in his letters to Sir Robert Sydney (brother to the poet's great patron), which are still extant, and contain a minute detail of most of the memorable occurrences of that time.

It should likewise be remembered that Verses by Spenser are prefixed to Lewknor's *Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, printed in 1599.

9. *ROMEO AND JULIET*, 1595.

It has been already observed, that our author, in his early plays, appears to have been much addicted to rhyming; a practice from which he gradually departed, though he never wholly deserted it. In this piece *more* rhymes, I believe, are found, than in any other of his plays, *Love's Labour Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* only excepted. This circumstance, the story on which it is founded, so likely to captivate a young poet, the imperfect form in which it originally appeared, and its very early publication*, all incline me to believe that this was Shakspeare's first tragedy; for the three parts of *R. Henry VI.* do not pretend to that title.

“A new ballad of *Romeo and Juliet*” (perhaps our author's play), was entered on the Stationers' books, August 5, 1596 †, and the first sketch of the play was printed

* There is no edition of any of our author's genuine plays extant, prior to 1597, when *Romeo and Juliet* was published.

† There is no entry in the Stationers' books relative to the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*, antecedent to its publication in 1597, if this does not relate to it. This entry was made by Edward Whyte, and therefore is not likely to have related to the poem called *Romeo and Julietta*, which was entered in 1582, by Richard Tottel. How vague the description of plays was at this time, may appear from the following

printed in 1597 : but it did not appear in its present form till two years afterwards.

Few of his plays appear to have been entered at Stationers-Hall, till they had been some time in possession of the stage ; on which account it may be conjectured that this tragedy was written in 1595.

If the following passage in an old comedy already mentioned, entitled *Dr. Dodipoll*, which had appeared before 1596, be considered as an imitation, it may add some weight to the supposition that *Romeo and Juliet* had been exhibited before that year :

“ The glorious parts of fair Lucilia.

“ Take them and join them in the heavenly spheres,

following entry, which is found in the Stationers' books, an. 1590, and seems to relate to Marlowe's *tragedy* of *Tamburlaine*, published in that year, by Richard Jones :

“ To Richard Jones] Twoe Commical *Discourses* of *Tamburlein*, the *Cythian Shepparde*.”

In Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, as originally performed, several comick interludes were introduced; whence, perhaps, the epithet *comical* was added to the title.—As tragedies were sometimes entitled *discourses*, so a grave poem or *sad discourse* in verse (to use the language of the times), was frequently denominated a *tragedy*. All the poems inserted in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, and some of Drayton's pieces, are called *tragedies*, by Meres and other ancient writers. Some of Sir David Lindsay's poems, though not in a dramattick form, are also by their author entitled *tragedies*.

E e i j

“ And

“ And fix them there as an eternal light
 “ For Lovers to adore and wonder at.”

Dr. Dodipoll.

“ Take him and cut him out into little stars,
 “ And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
 “ That all the world shall be in love with night,
 “ And pay no worship to the garish sun.”

Romeo and Juliet.

Mr. Steevens in his observations on *Romeo and Juliet* has quoted these lines from Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond*:

“ And nought-respecting *death* (the last of paines)
 “ Plac'd his *pale colours* (th' *ensign* of his might)
 “ Upon his new-got spoil, &c.”

So in *Romeo and Juliet*, Act V. Sc. iii.

————— “ Beauty's *ensign* yet
 “ Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
 “ And *death's pale flag* is not advanced there.”

That Shakspeare imitated Daniel, or was imitated by him, there can, I think, be little doubt. The early appearance of *The Complaint of Rosamond* * (which is commended by Nashe, in a tract entitled *Pierce Penni-*

* “ A booke called *Delia*, containynge diverse sonates, with *the Complainge of Rosamonde*,” was entered at Stationers-Hall by Simon Waterson, in Feb. 1591-2.

lesse his Supplication, &c. 1592), seems to authorize the former opinion.

From a speech of the Nurse in this play, which contains these words—"It is now since the earthquake eleven years, &c." Mr. Tyrwhitt conjectures, that *Romeo and Juliet*, or at least part of it, was written in 1591; the novels from which Shakspeare may be supposed to have drawn his story, not mentioning any such circumstance; while, on the other hand, there actually was an earthquake in England on the 6th of April 1580, which he might here have had in view*.—It is not without great distrust of my own opinion that I express my dissent from a gentleman, to whose judgment the highest respect is due; but, I own, this argument does not appear to me conclusive. It seems extremely improbable that Shakspeare, when he was writing this tragedy, should have adverted, with such precision, to the date of an earthquake that had been felt in his youth; unless we suppose him to have entertained so strange and incongruous a thought, as to wish to persuade his audience, that the events which are the subject of his play happened at Verona in 1591, at the very moment that a dramatick representation of them was exhibiting in London: for if *Romeo and Juliet* was written in 1591, it probably was then also represented. The passage quoted strikes me, as only displaying one of those characteristical traits, which distinguish old people of the lower class; who delight

* See *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I. Sc. iii.

in enumerating a multitude of minute circumstances that have no relation to the business immediately under their consideration*, and are particularly fond of computing time from extraordinary events, such as battles, comets, plagues, and earthquakes. This feature of their character our author has, in various places, strongly marked. Thus (to mention one of many instances) the Grave-digger in *Hamlet* says, that he came to his employment, “of all the days i’ th’ year, that day that the last king o’ercame *Fortinbras*—that very day that young *Hamlet* was born.”—Shakspeare probably remembered the earthquake in 1580, and thought he might introduce one, *for the nonce*, at Mantua. Why he has placed this earthquake at the distance of *eleven* years, it is not very easy to determine. However, it may be observed, that having supposed it to have happened on the day on which Juliet was weaned, he could not well have made it more distant than *thirteen* years; which, indeed, from the context, should seem to be the true reading. Supposing the author to have used figures, the mistake might easily have happened.—At present there is a manifest contradiction in the Nurse’s account; for she expressly

* Thus Mrs. Quickly in *K. Henry IV.* reminds Falstaff, that, he “swore, on a parcel-gilt goblet, to marry her, sitting in her Dolphin chamber, at a round table, by a sea-coal fire, on Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the prince broke his head for likening his father to a singing man of Windsor.”

says,

says, that Juliet was within a fortnight and odd days of completing her *fourteenth year*; and yet, according to the computation here made, she could not well be much more than *twelve* years old. Perhaps Shakspeare was more careful to mark the garrulity, than the precision of the old woman;—or perhaps, he meant this very incorrectness as a trait of her character:—or, without having recourse to either of these suppositions, shall we say, that our author was here, as in some other places, hasty and inattentive? It is certain that there is nothing in which he is less accurate, than the computation of time. Of his negligence in this respect, *As you Like It*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Othello*, furnish remarkable instances*.

10. COMEDY OF ERRORS, 1596.

In a tract, written by Thomas Decker, entitled, *Newes from Hell brought by the Devil's Carrier*, 1606, there seems to be an allusion to this comedy:

“ —his ignorance (arising from his blindness) is the only cause of this *Comedie of Errors*.”

This play was neither entered on the Stationers' books, nor printed, till 1623, but is mentioned by

* See *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act II. Sc. last.—*Measure for Measure*, Act I. Sc. iii. and iv.—*As you Like It*, Act IV. Sc. i. and iii.—*Othello*, Act III. Sc. iii. “I slept the next night well,” &c.

Meres in 1598; and exhibits internal proofs of having been an early production. It could not, however, have been written before 1596; for the translation of the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, from which the plot was taken, was not published till 1595.

The *alternate* rhimes that are found in this play, as well as in *Love's Labour Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, are a farther proof that these pieces were among our author's earliest dramatick productions. We are told by himself, that *Venus and Adonis* was his first composition. *The Rape of Lucrece* was probably the next. When he turned his thoughts to the stage, the measure that he had used in these poems naturally presented itself to him in his first dramatick essays.

11. *HAMLET*, 1596.

The tragedy of *Hamlet* was not registered in the books of the Stationers-Company till the 26th of July 1602, nor printed till 1604. The circumstance, and indeed the general air of the play itself, which has not, it must be owned, the appearance of an early composition, might induce us to class it five or six years later than 1596, were we not over-powered by the proof adduced by Dr. Farmer, and by other circumstances, from which it appears to have been acted in,
or

or before, that year *. The piece, however, which was then exhibited, was probably but a rude sketch of that which we now possess; for, from the title-page of the first edition, in 1604, we learn, that (like *Romeo and Juliet*, and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*) it had been enlarged to almost twice its original size.

The Case is altered, a comedy, attributed to Ben Jonson, and written before the end of the year 1599 †, contains a passage, which seems to me to have a reference to this play:

Angelo. “But first I’ll play the ghost; I’ll call him out §.”

In the second act of *Hamlet*, a contest between the

* “Dr. Lodge published, in the year 1596, a pamphlet called *Wit’s Miserie, or the World’s Madness, discovering the incarnate Devils of the age*, quarto. One of these devils is *Hate-Virtue, or sorrow for another man’s successe*, who, says the doctor, is a *foule lubber*, and looks as pale as the vizard of the ghost, who cried so miserably at the theatre, *Hamlet, revenge.*” Farmer’s *Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*.

† This comedy was not printed till 1609, but it had appeared many years before. The time when it was written is ascertained with great precision by the following circumstances. It contains an allusion to Mere’s *Wit’s Treasury*, first printed in the latter-end of the year 1598 (ante, p. 276.) and is itself mentioned by Nashe in his *Lenten Stuff*, 4to. 1599.—“It is right of the merry cobbler’s stuff, in that witty play of *The Case is Altered*,”

§ Jonson’s Works, vol. vii. p. 362. Whalley’s edition.

children

children of the queen's chapel *, and the actors of the established theatres, is alluded to. At what time that contest began, is uncertain. But, should it appear not to have commenced till some years after the date here assigned, it would not, I apprehend, be a sufficient reason for ascribing this play to a later period; for, as we are certain that considerable additions were made to it after its first production, and have some authority for attributing the first sketch of it to 1596, till that authority is shaken, we may presume, that any passage which is inconsistent with that date was not in the play originally, but a subsequent insertion.

With respect to the allusion in question, it probably was an addition; for it is not found in the quarto of 1604 (which has not the appearance of a mutilated or imperfect copy), nor did it appear in print till the publication of the folio in 1623.

The same observation may be made on the passage produced by Mr. Holt, to prove that this play was not written till after 1597: "*Their inhibition comes by means of the late innovation.*" This, indeed, does

* Between the years 1595 and 1600, some of Lilly's comedies were performed by these children. Many of the plays of Jonson were represented by them between 1600 and 1609.—From a passage in *Jack Drum's Entertainment, or the Comedy of Pasquil and Catherine*, which was printed in 1601, we learn that they were much followed at that time.

appear in the quarto of 1604, but, we may presume, was added in the interval between 1597 (when the statute alluded to—39 Eliz. ch. 4.—was enacted), and that year.

Hamlet * Sadler was one of the witnesses to Shakspeare's Will. He was probably born soon after the first exhibition of this play; and, according to this date, was twenty years old at the time of his attestation.

If this tragedy had not appeared till some years after the date here assigned, he would not have been at the time of Shakspeare's death above sixteen or seventeen years old; at which age he scarcely would have been chosen as a witness to so solemn an act.

The following passage, in *An Epistle to the Gentlemen Students of the Two Universities*, by Thomas Nashe, prefixed to Greene's *Arcadia* (which has no date), has been thought to allude to this play.—“I will turn back to my first text of studies of delight, and talk a little in friendship with a few of our trivial

* It has been observed to me, that there are other instances of this being used as a Christian name; it is certainly very uncommon, and may be fairly supposed, in this case, to have taken its rise from the play.—After all, however, it is not quite clear that this was his name. The name subscribed to Shakspeare's original Will (which I have seen) seems to be *Hamnet*; but in the body of the Will he is called *Hamlet* Sadler.

translators.

translators *. It is a common practice now-a-days, among a sort of shifting companions, that runne through every art, and thrive by none, to leave the trade of *Noverint*, whereto they were born, and busie themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely latinize their neck-verse if they should have neede; yet English *Seneca*, read by candle-light, yeelds many good sentences, as *Bloud is a beggar*, and so forth: and if you intreat him faire in a frosty morning, he will affoord you whole hamlets, I should say, handfuls of tragical speeches. But, O grief! *Tempus edax rerum*—what is that will last always? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be drie; and *Seneca*, let bloud line by line and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage.”

This passage does not, in my apprehension, decisively prove that our author's *Hamlet* was written so early as 1591 (in which year † Dr. Farmer, on good grounds, conjectures that Greene's *Arcadia* was published; for supposing this to have been a sneer at

* The person, whom Nashe had in contemplation in this passage, was, I believe, *Thomas Kyd*. The only play to which his name is affixed (*Cornelia*), is a professed *translation* from the French of Garnier, who imitated *Seneca*, as did also Kyd. MALONE.

† Mr. Oldys, in his MS. Additions to Langbaine's *Lives of the Dramatick Poets*, says, on I know not what authority, that Greene's *Arcadia* was printed in 1589. If he is right, it is still less probable that this passage should have related to our author's *Hamlet*.

Shakspeare,

Shakspeare, it might have been inserted in some new editions of this tract after 1596, it being a frequent practice of Nashe and Greene, to make additions to their pamphlets at every re-impression.

But it is by no means clear, that Shakspeare was the person whom Nashe had here in contemplation. He seems to point at some dramatick writer of that time, who had been originally a scrivener or attorney :—

“ *A clerk foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
Who penn'd a stanza when he should engross :**”

Who, instead of transcribing deeds and pleadings, chose to imitate Seneca's plays, of which a translation had been published not many years before.—“ *The Trade of Noverint*” is the trade of an attorney or notary *. Shakspeare was not bred to the law, at least we have no such tradition; nor, however freely he may have borrowed from North's *Plutarch* and Holinshed's *Chronicle*, does he appear to be at all indebted to the translation of *Seneca*.

Of all the writers of the age of queen Elizabeth, Nashe is the most licentious in his language; perpe-

* “ The country lawyers too jog down apace,
Each with his *noverint universi* face.”

Ravenscroft's Prologue prefixed to *Titus Andronicus*.

Our ancient deeds were written in Latin, and frequently began with the words, *Noverint Universi*. The form is still retained: *Know all men*, &c.

tually distorting words from their primitive signification, in a manner often puerile and ridiculous, but more frequently incomprehensible and absurd. His prose works, if they were collected together, would perhaps exhibit a greater farrago of unintelligible jargon, than is to be found in the productions of any author ancient or modern. An argument that rests on a term used by such a writer, has but a weak foundation.

The phrase—"whole hamlets of tragical speeches"—is certainly intelligible, without supposing an allusion to the play; and might have only meant a *large quantity*.—We meet a similar expression in our author's *Cymbeline*.

"I'd let a *parish* of such Clotens blood."—

It should also be observed, "that hamlets," in the foregoing passage, is not printed in Italicks *, though the word *Seneca*, in the same sentence, is; and all the quotations, authors' names, and *books* mentioned in this epistle, are distinguished by that character.

12. KING JOHN, 1596.

This is the only one of our poet's uncontested plays that is not entered in the books of the Stationers-Company. It was not printed till 1623, but is mentioned by Meres in 1598, unless he mistook the old

* It is so printed in the edition of 1589. FARMER.

play in two parts, printed in 1591, for the composition of Shakspeare*.

In the first act of *King John*, an ancient tragedy, entitled *Solyman and Perseda*, is alluded to. The earliest edition of that play, now extant, is that of 1599, but it was written, and probably acted, many years before; for it was entered on the Stationers' books, by Edward Whyte, November 20, 1592.

Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, printed in 1603, contains a passage, which, if it should be considered as an imitation of a similar one in *King John*, will ascertain this historical drama to have been written at least before that year:

“Then how much more in me, whose youthful veins,
“*Like a proud river, overflow their bounds.*”

* It is observable, that on the republication of this old play in 1611, the two parts are set forth—“as they were (sundry times) lately acted by the *Queene's Majesties servants*”—a description, which, probably, was copied literally from the former edition in 1591. If this had been really Shakspeare's performance, it would have been described, on its re-impression, *as acted by his Majesty's servants*; for so runs the title of most of his genuine pieces, that were either originally printed or re-published after the year 1603. The bookseller, the better to impose on the publick, prefixed the letters W. Sh. to the new edition of this play in 1611, which do not appear in the former impression in 1591.

So in *King John* :

“ Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum,

“ *Like a proud river peering o'er his bounds.*”

13. *RICHARD II.* 1597.

King Richard II. was entered on the Stationers' books, August 29, 1597, and printed in that year.

14. *RICHARD III.* 1597.

Entered at the Stationers-Hall, October 20, 1597. Printed in that year.

15. *FIRST PART OF K. HENRY IV.* 1597.

Entered February 25, 1597, according to our present reckoning, 1598. Written, therefore, probably in 1597. Printed in 1598.

16. *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE,* 1598.

Entered July 22, 1598; and mentioned by Meres in that year. Published in 1600.

17. *ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL,* 1598.

All's Well that Ends Well was not entered at Stationers-Hall, nor printed, till 1623; but probably is the play mentioned by Meres, in 1598, under the title of *Love's Labour Won*. This comedy was, I believe, also sometimes called *A Bad Beginning makes a Good Ending*; for I find that a play with that title, together

together with *Hotspur*, *Benedict* and *Beatrice*, and several others, was acted at court, by John Heminge's company, in the year 1613; and no such piece is to be found in any collection, however complete or extensive, nor is such a title preserved in any list or catalogue whatsoever. As the titles of *Hotspur* and *Benedict* and *Beatrice*, were substituted in the place of *The First Part of King Henry IV.* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, it is probable that the other was only a new name for *All's Well that Ends Well*.

By an entry in the hand-writing of king Charles I. in a copy of the second edition of our author's plays in folio, which formerly belonged to that monarch, and is now in the possession of Mr. Steevens, it appears, that this play was also sometimes called *Mr. Parolles*.

18. SECOND PART OF K. HENRY IV. 1598.

The Second Part of K. Henry IV. was entered on the Stationers' books, August 23, 1600, and was printed in that year. It was, probably, written in the latter-end of the year 1598; for from the epilogue it appears to have been composed before *K. Henry V.* which itself must have been written in, or before, 1599.

I suppose this drama to have been written in the latter part of the year 1598, because Meres, who in his *Wit's Treasury* (which was not published before September in that year) has enumerated *Henry IV.* among our author's plays, does not speak of it as a

first part, nor does he mention it as a play in *two* parts. His words are these; "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latines; so Shakspeare, among the English, is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love's Labour Lost*, his *Love's Labour Wonne*, his *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for tragedy*, his *Richard II.* *Richard III.* *HENRY IV.* *K. John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*†."

The following allusion to one of the characters in this play, which is found in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, Act V. sc. ii. first acted in 1599, is an additional authority for supposing *The Second Part of K. Henry IV.* to have been written in 1598.

"*Savi.* What's he, gentle Mons. Brisk? Not that gentleman?

"*Fast.* No, Lady; this is a kinsman to *Justice Silence.*"

19. KING HENRY V. 1599.

Mr. Pope thought that this historical drama was one of our author's latest compositions; but he was

* The circumstance of Hotspur's death in this play, and its being an historical drama, I suppose, induced *Meres* to denominate *The First Part of King Henry IV.* a tragedy.

† *Wit's Treasury*, p. 282.

evidently

evidently mistaken. *King Henry V.* was entered on the Stationers' books, August 14, 1600, and printed in the same year. It was written *after* the Second Part of *K. Henry IV.* being promised in the epilogue of that play; and while the Earl of Essex was in Ireland*. Lord Essex went to Ireland, April 15, 1599, and returned to London on the 28th of September, in the same year. So that this play (unless the passage relative to him was inserted after the piece was finished) must have been composed between April and September 1599. Supposing that passage a subsequent insertion, the play was probably not written *long* before; for it is not mentioned by Meres in 1598.

The prologue † to Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, seems clearly to allude to this play; and, if we were sure that it was written at the same time with the piece itself, might induce us, notwithstanding the silence of Meres, to place *King Henry V.* a year or two earlier; for *Every Man in his Humour* is said to have been acted in 1598. But I suspect that the prologue, which now appears before it, was not written till after 1601, when the play was printed without a prologue. It

* See the Chorus to the fifth act of *King Henry V.*

† "He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see

"One such, to-day, as other plays should be;

"Where neither Chorus wafts you o'er the seas, &c."

Prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*. Fol. 1616.

appears to have been Jonson's first performance*; and we may presume that it was the very play, which, we are told, was brought on the stage by the good offices of Shakspeare, who himself acted in it†. Malignant and envious as Jonson appears to have been, he hardly would have ridiculed his benefactor at the very time he was so essentially obliged to him. Some years afterwards, his jealousy probably broke out, and vented itself in this prologue. It is certain that, not long after the year 1600, a coolness ‡ arose between
Shakspeare

* Jonson himself tells us, in his Induction to *The Magnetick Lady*, that this was his first dramatick performance.—
“The author beginning his studies of this kind with *Every Man in his Humour*.”

† If the names of the actors, prefixed to this play, were arranged in the same order as the persons represented, which is very probable, Shakspeare played the part of *Old Knowell*. It is said, that he also played the part of Adam in *As You Like It*; and we are informed by Betterton, that he performed the *Ghost* in his own *Hamlet*. We may presume, therefore, that he usually represented old men.

‡ See an old comedy called *The Return from Parnassus*: [This piece was not published till 1606; but appears to have been written in 1602—certainly was produced before the death of Queen Elizabeth, which happened on the 24th of March 1603.] “Why here's our fellow Shakspeare puts them all down; ay, and *Ben Jonson* too. O, that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow; he brought up Horace giving

Shakspeare and him, which, however he may talk of his almost idolatrous affection, produced on his part,

giving the poets a pill, but our fellow Shakspeare hath given him a purge, that made him bewray his credit."

The play of Jonson's, in which *he gave the poets a pill*, is the *Poetaster*, acted in 1601. In that piece some passages of *King Henry V.* are ridiculed. In what manner Shakspeare *put him down, or made him bewray his credit*, does not appear. His retaliation, we may be well assured, contained no gross or illiberal abuse; and, perhaps, did not go beyond a ballad or an epigram, which may have perished with things of greater consequence. He has, however, marked his disregard for the calumniator of his fame, by not leaving him any memorial by his Will.—In an apologetical dialogue that Jonson annexed to the *Poetaster*, he says, he had been provoked for three years (i. e. from 1598 to 1601) on every stage by slanderers; as for the players, he says,

"It is true, I taxed them,
And yet but some, and those so sparingly,
As all the rest might have sat still unquestion'd:—
—————What they have done against me
I am not mov'd with. If it gave them meat,
Or got them cloaths, 'tis well; that was their end.
Only amongst them, I am sorry for
Some better natures, by the rest drawn in
To run in that vile line."

By the words "*Some better natures*," there can, I think, be little doubt that Shakspeare was alluded to.

from

from that time to the death of our author, and for many years afterwards, much clumsy sarcasm and many malevolent reflections*.

On this play Mr. Pope has the following note, Act I. Sc. i.

“ This first scene was added since the edition of 1608, which is much short of the present editions, wherein

* In his *Silent Woman*, Act V. Sc. ii. 1609, Jonson perhaps pointed at Shakspeare, as one whom he *viewed with scornful, yet with jealous eyes*:

“ So, they may censure poets and authors, and compare them; Daniel with Spenser, Jonson with *t'other youth*, and so forth.” Decker, however, might have been meant.

In the Induction to *Bartholomew-Fair*, which was acted in 1614, two years before the death of our author, three of his plays, and in the piece itself two others, are attempted to be ridiculed.

In *The Devil's an Ass*, acted in 1616, all his historical plays are obliquely censured.

Meer-er. “ By my faith you are cunning in the chronicles.

Fitz-Dot. “ No, I confess, I ha't from the play-books, and think they are more authentick.”

They are again attacked in the Induction to *Bartholomew-Fair*:

“ An some writer that I know had but the penning o'this matter, he would ha' made you such a *jig-a-jog i'the booths*, you should ha' thought an *earthquake* had been in the fair. But these *master-poets*, they will ha' their own absurd courses, they will be informed of nothing.”

The

wherein the speeches are generally enlarged, and raised; several whole scenes besides, and the choruses also, were since *added by Shakspeare.*"

Dr. Warburton also positively asserts that this first scene was written after the accession of K. James I.; and the subsequent editors agree, that several additions were made *by the author* to *King Henry V.* after it was originally

The following passage in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1601, was, I think, likewise pointed against Shakspeare:

"Besides they would wish your poets would leave to be promoters of other men's jests, and to way-lay all the stale apophthegms or *old books* they can hear of, in print or otherwise, to farce their scenes withal:—Again, that feeding their friends with nothing of their own, but what they have *twice* or *thrice cooked*, they should not wantonly give out how soon they had *dress'd it*, nor how many coaches came to carry away the broken meat, besides hobby-horses and foot-cloth nags."

Jonson's plots were all his own invention; our author's chiefly taken from preceding plays or novels. The former employed a year or two in composing a play; the latter probably produced two every year, while he remained in the theatre.

The Induction to *The Staple of News*, which appeared in 1625, not very long after the publication of our author's plays in folio, contains a sneer at a passage in *Julius Cæsar*:

"Know Cæsar doth not wrong; nor without cause
"Will he be satisfied;"

which

originally composed. But there is, I believe, no good ground for these assertions. It is true, that no perfect edition of this play was published before that in folio, in 1623; but it does not follow from thence, that the scenes which then first appeared in print, and all the choruses, were added by *Shakspeare*, as Mr. Pope supposes,

which for the purpose of ridicule is quoted unfaithfully; and in the same play may be found an effort, as impotent as that of Voltaire*, to raise a laugh at Hamlet's exclamation, when he kills Polonius.

Some other passages, which are found in Jonson's works, might be mentioned in support of this observation; but being quoted hereafter for other purposes, they are here omitted.

Notwithstanding these proofs, Jonson's malevolence to *Shakspeare*, and jealousy of his superior reputation, have been doubted by Mr. Pope and others; and much stress has been laid on a passage in his *Discoveries*, and on the commendatory verses prefixed to the first edition of our author's plays in folio.—The reader, after having perused the following character of Jonson, drawn by Mr. Drummond of Hawthornden, a contemporary, and an intimate acquaintance of his, will not, perhaps, readily believe these *posthumous* encomiums to have been sincere. “ Ben

* “ Ah! ma mere, s'écric-t-il, il y a un gros rat derrière la tapissaire—il tire son épée, court au rat, et tue le bon homme Polonius.”—Oeuvres de Voltaire, Tome XV. p. 473, 4to.

“ Le prince tue le pere de sa maitresse, feignant de tuer un rat.”—Tome IX. Dissertation sur la tragedie ancienne et moderne, p. 26.

poses, after 1608. We know, indeed, the contrary to be true: for the chorus to the fifth act must have been written in 1599. The fair inference to be drawn from the imperfect and mutilated copies of this play, published in 1600, 1602, and 1608, is, not that the

Jonson (says that writer), was a great lover and praiser of himself; a contemner and scorner of others, given rather to lose a friend than a jest; jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he lived; a dissembler of the parts which reign in him; a bragger of some good that he wanted: he thinketh nothing well done, but what either himself or some of his friends have said or done; he is passionately kind and angry; careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, but, if he be well answered [angry], at himself; interprets the best sayings and deeds often to the worst*. He was for any religion, as being versed in both; oppressed with fancy, which over-mastered his reason, a general disease in many poets. His inventions are smooth and easy; but above all, he excelleth in translation. *Drummond's Works*, fol. 1711, p. 226.

In the year 1619 Jonson went to Scotland, to visit Mr. Drummond, who has left a curious account of a conversation that passed between them, relative to the principal poets of those times.

* His misquoting a line of *Julius Cæsar*, so as to render it nonsense, at a time when the play was in print, is a strong illustration of this part of his character. The plea of an unfaithful memory cannot be urged in his defence, for he tells us in his *Discoveries*, that till he was past forty, he could repeat every thing that he had written.

whole play, as we now have it, did not then exist, but that those copies were surreptitious (probably taken down in short-hand, during the representation) ; and that the editor in 1600, not being able to publish the whole, published what he could.

I have not, indeed, met with any evidence (except in three plays) that the several scenes, which are found in the folio of 1623, and are not in the preceding quartos, were added by the second labour of the author.—The last chorus of *King Henry V.* already mentioned, affords a striking proof that this was not always the case. The two copies of *The Second Part of King Henry IV.* printed in the same year (1600) furnish another. In one of these, the whole first scene of Act III. is wanting ; not because it was then unwritten (for it is found in the other copy published in that year), but because the editor was not possessed of it. That what have been called *additions by the author*, were not really such, may be also collected from another circumstance ; that in some of the quartos, where these supposed additions are wanting, references and replies are found to the passages omitted*.

* Of this see a remarkable instance in *King Henry IV. P. II. Act I. Sc. i.* where Morton, in a long speech, having informed Northumberland that the archbishop of York had joined the rebel party, the earl replies—“*I knew of this before.*”—The quarto contains the reply, but not a single line of the narrative to which it relates.

I do

I do not, however, mean to say, that Shakspeare never made any alterations in his plays. We have reason to believe that *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, were entirely new written; and a second revisal, or temporary topicks, might have suggested, in a course of years, some additions and alterations in all his pieces. But with respect to the entire scenes that are wanting in some of the early editions (particularly those of *King Henry V.* *King Richard II.* and *The Second Part of King Henry IV.*) I suppose the omissions to have arisen from the imperfection of the copies; and instead of saying that “the first scene of *King Henry V.* was added by the author after the publication of the quarto in 1600,” all that we can pronounce with certainty is, that this scene is not found in the quarto of 1600.

20. *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.* 1600.

Much Ado about Nothing was written, we may presume, early in the year 1600; for it was entered at Stationers-Hall, August 23, 1600, and printed in that year.

It is not mentioned by Meres in his list of our author's plays, published in the latter-end of the year 1598.

21. *AS YOU LIKE IT*, 1600.

This comedy was not printed till 1623, and the caveat or memorandum * in the second volume of the books of the Stationers-Company, relative to the three plays of *As You Like It*, *Henry V.* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, has no date except *Aug. 4.* But immediately *above* that caveat there is an entry, dated May 27, 1600—and the entry immediately *following* it, is dated *Jan. 23, 1603.* We may therefore presume that this caveat was entered *between* those two periods: more especially, as the dates, scattered over the pages where this entry is found, are, except in one instance, in a regular series from 1596 to 1615. This will appear more clearly by exhibiting the entry exactly as it stands in the book:

27 May, 1600.

To Mr. Roberts.] Allarum to London.

4 Aug.

<i>As You Like It</i> , a book, <i>Henry the Fift</i> , a book, <i>Every Man in his Humour</i> , a book, <i>Comedy of Much Ado about Nothing</i> ,	}	to be staied.
---	---	---------------

23 Jan. 1603.

To Thomas Thorpe, and William Aspley.] This to be their copy, &c.

* See Mr. Steevens's extracts from the books of the Stationers-Company, ante, p. 270.

It is extremely probable that this 4th of August was of the year 1600; which standing a little higher on the paper, the clerk of the Stationers-Company might have thought unnecessary to be repeated. All the plays which were entered with *As You Like It*, and are here said *to be staied*, were printed in the year 1600 or 1601. The stay or injunction against the printing appears to have been very speedily taken off; for in ten days afterwards, on the 14th of August, 1600, *King Henry V.* was entered, and published in the same year. So, *Much Ado about Nothing* was entered August 23, 1600, and printed also in that year: and *Every Man in his Humour* was published in 1601.

Shakspeare, it is said, played the part of Adam in *As You Like It*. As he was not eminent on the stage, it is probable that he ceased to act some years before he retired to the country. His appearance, however, in this comedy, is not inconsistent with the date here assigned; for we know that he performed a part in Jonson's *Sejanus* in 1603.

22. MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, 1601.

The first sketch of this comedy was printed in 1602. It was entered in the books of the Stationers-Company, on the 18th of January 1601-2, and was, therefore, probably, written in 1601, after the *Two Parts of King Henry IV.* being, it is said, composed at the desire of queen Elizabeth, in order to exhibit Falstaff in love, when all the pleasantry which he could afford in any other situation was exhausted. But it may not be

thought so clear, that it was written after *King Henry V.* Nym and Bardolph are both hanged in *King Henry V.* yet appear in *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Falstaff is disgraced in *The Second Part of King Henry IV.* and dies in *King Henry V.* But in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* he talks as if he were yet in favour at court; “*If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed, &c.*” and Mr. Page discountenances Fenton’s addresses to his daughter, *because he kept company with the wild prince and with Poins.* These circumstances seem to favour the supposition that this play was written between *The First and Second Parts of King Henry IV.* But that it was not written then, may be collected from the tradition above-mentioned. If it should be placed (as Dr. Johnson observes it should be read) between *The Second Part of King Henry IV.* and *Henry V.* it must be remembered, that Mrs. Quickly, who is half-bawd, half-hostess, in *King Henry IV.* is, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Dr. Caius’s housekeeper, and makes a decent appearance; and in *King Henry V.* is Pistol’s wife, and dies in an hospital; a progression that is not very natural. Besides, on Mrs. Quickly’s first appearance in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Falstaff does not know her, nor does she know Pistol nor Bardolph. The truth, I believe, is, that it was written *after King Henry V.* and after Shakspeare had killed Falstaff. In obedience to the royal commands, having revived him, he found it necessary, at the same time, to revive all those persons with whom he was wont to be exhibited; Nym,
Pistol,

Pistol, Bardolph, and the Page; and disposed of them, as he found it convenient, without a strict regard to their situations or catastrophes in former plays.

There is reason to believe that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was revised and considerably enlarged by the author, after its first production. The old edition in 1602, like that of *Romeo and Juliet*, is apparently a rough draught, and not a mutilated or imperfect copy. At what time the alterations and additions were made, is uncertain. Mr. Warton supposes them to have been made in 1607. Dr. Farmer concurs with * him in that opinion, though he does not think the argument, on which it is founded, conclusive. I have not met with any information on this head.

This comedy was not printed in its present state, till 1623, when it was published with the rest of our author's plays, in folio.

23. KING HENRY VIII. 1601.

This play was probably written, as Dr. Johnson and Mr. Steevens observe, before the death of queen Elizabeth, which happened on the 24th of March 1603. The eulogium on king James, which is blended with the panegyrick on Elizabeth, in the last scene, was evidently a subsequent insertion, after the accession

* Not before 1607. Probably some years after; at least not acted, as the imperfect copy was reprinted in 1619.

of the Scottish monarch to the throne ; for Shakspeare was too well acquainted with courts, to compliment, in the life-time of queen Elizabeth, her presumptive successor, of whom history informs us she was not a little jealous. That the prediction concerning king James was added after the death of the queen, is still more clearly evinced, as Dr. Johnson has remarked, by the awkward manner in which it is connected with the foregoing and subsequent lines.

It may be objected, that, if this play was written after the accession of king James, the author could not introduce a panegyrick on him, without making queen Elizabeth the vehicle of it, she being the object immediately presented to the audience in the last act of *King Henry VIII.* and that, therefore, the praises so profusely lavished on her, do *not* prove this play to have been written in her life-time : on the contrary, that the concluding lines of her character seem to imply that she was dead, when it was composed. The objection certainly has weight ; but, I apprehend, the following observations afford a sufficient answer to it.

1. It is more likely that Shakspeare should have written a play, the chief subject of which is, the disgrace of queen Catharine, the aggrandizement of Anne Boleyn, and the birth of her daughter, in the life-time of that daughter, than after her death ; at a time when the subject must have been highly pleasing at court, rather than at a period when it must have been less interesting.

Queen

Queen Catharine, it is true, is represented as an amiable character, but still she is *eclipsed*; and the greater her merit, the higher was the compliment to the mother of Elizabeth, to whose superior beauty she was obliged to give way.

2. Had *King Henry VIII.* been written in the time of king James I. the author, instead of expatiating so largely in the last scene, in praise of the queen, which he could not think would be very acceptable to her successor, would probably have made him the principal figure in the prophecy, and thrown her into the back-ground as much as possible.

3. Were James I. Shakspeare's chief object in the original construction of the last act of this play, he would, probably, have given a very short character of Elizabeth, and have *dwelt* on that of James, with whose praise he would have *concluded*, in order to make the stronger impression on the audience, instead of returning again to queen Elizabeth, in a very awkward and abrupt manner, after her character seemed to be quite finished; an awkwardness that can only be accounted for, by supposing the panegyrick on king James an after-production*.

4. If

* After having enumerated some of the blessings that were to ensue from the birth of Elizabeth, and celebrated her majesty's various virtues, the poet thus proceeds:

Cran.

4. If the queen had been dead when our author wrote this play, he would have been acquainted with the particular circumstances attending her death, the situation of the kingdom at that time, and of foreign states, &c. and, as archbishop Cranmer is supposed to have had the gift of prophecy, Shakspeare, probably, would have made him mention some of those

Cran. " In *her* days every man shall eat in safety,
Under his own vine, what he plants, and sing
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.
God shall be truly known; and those about her
From her shall read the perfect ways of honour,
And by those claim their greatness, not by blood.
[Nor shall this peace *sleep* with her; but as when
The bird of wonder *dies*, the maiden phoenix,
Her ashes new-create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself;
So shall she leave her blessedness to one, &c.

—————*He* shall flourish,
And, like a mountain cedar, reach his branches
To all the plains about him:—our children's children
Shall see this, and bless heaven.

King. Thou speakest wonders.]

Cran. *She* shall be, to the happiness of England,
An aged princess: many days shall see her,
And yet no day without a deed to crown it.
Wou'd I had known no more! but she *must die*,
She must, the saints must have her; yet a virgin, &c."

The lines between crotchets are those supposed to have been inserted by the author after the accession of king James.
circumstances.

circumstances. Whereas the prediction, as it stands at present, is quite general, and such as might, without any hazard of error, have been pronounced in the life-time of her majesty; for the principal facts that it foretells are, that she should die aged, and a virgin. Of the former, supposing this piece to have been written in 1601, the author was sufficiently secure; for she was then near seventy years old. The latter may, perhaps, be thought too delicate a subject, to have been mentioned while she was yet living. But, we may presume, it was far from being an ungrateful topick; for very early after her accession to the throne, she appears to have been proud of her maiden character; declaring, that she was *wedded* to her people; and that she desired no other inscription on her tomb, than—*Here lyeth Elizabeth, who reigned and died a VIRGIN* *. Besides, if Shakspeare knew, as probably most people at that time did, that she became very solicitous about the reputation of virginity, when her title to it was at least equivocal, this would be an additional inducement to him to compliment her on that head.

5. Granting that the *latter part* of the panegyrick on Elizabeth implies that she was dead when it was composed, it would not prove that this play was written in the time of king James; for *these latter lines* in praise of the queen, as well as the whole of the compliment to the king, might have been added after his

* Camden, 27. Melvil, 49.

accession to the throne, in order to bring the speaker back to the object immediately before him, the infant Elizabeth. And this Mr. Theobald conjectured to have been the case. I do not, however, see any *necessity* for this supposition; as there is nothing, in my apprehension, contained in *any* of the lines, in praise of the queen, inconsistent with the idea of the *whole* of the panegyrick on her having been composed in her life-time.

In further confirmation of what has been here advanced, to shew that this play was probably written while queen Elizabeth was yet alive, it may be observed (to use the words of an anonymous writer*), that “Shakspeare has cast the disagreeable parts of her *father's* character as much into shade as possible; that he has represented him as greatly displeased with the grievances of his subjects, and ordering them to be relieved; tender and obliging (in the early part of the play) to his queen; grateful to the cardinal; and, in the case of Cranmer, capable of distinguishing and rewarding true merit.” “He has exerted (adds the same author) an equal degree of complaisance, by the amiable lights in which he has shewn the *mother* of Elizabeth. Anne Bullen is represented as affected with the most tender concern for the sufferings of her mistress, queen Catharine; receiving the honour the king confers on her, by making her marchioness of Pembroke, with a graceful humility; and more

* The author of *Shakspeare illustrated*.

anxious to conceal her advancement from the queen, lest it should aggravate her sorrows, than solicitous to penetrate into the meaning of so extraordinary a favour, or of indulging herself in the flattering prospect of future royalty."

It is unnecessary to quote particular passages in support of these assertions; but the following lines, which are spoken of Anne Boleyn by the Lord Chamberlain, appear to me so evidently calculated for the ear of Elizabeth (to whom such incense was by no means displeasing), that I cannot forbear to transcribe them:—

——“ I have perused her well;
“ Beauty and honour are in her so mingled,
“ That they have caught the king: *and who knows yet,*
“ *But from this lady may proceed a gem,*
“ *To lighten all this isle.*”

The Globe play-house, we are told by the continuator of Stowe's Chronicle, was burnt down on St. Peter's day, in the year 1613, while the play of *King Henry VIII.* was exhibiting. Sir Henry Wotton (as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed) says, in one of his letters, that this accident happened during the exhibition of a *new* play, called *All is True*; which, however, appears both from Sir Henry's minute description of the piece, and from the account given by Stowe's continuator, to have been our author's play of *King Henry VIII.* If, indeed, Sir H. Wotton was accurate

in calling it a *new* play, all the foregoing reasoning on this subject would be at once overthrown; and this piece, instead of being ascribed to 1601, should have been placed twelve years later. But I strongly suspect that the only novelty attending this play, in the year 1613, was its title, decorations, and, perhaps, the prologue and epilogue. The Elector Palatine was in London in that year; and it appears from the MS-register of lord Harrington, treasurer of the chambers to King James I. that many of our author's plays were then exhibited for the entertainment of him and the princess Elizabeth. By the same register we learn, that the titles of many of them were changed * in that year. Princes are fond of opportunities to display their magnificence before strangers of distinction; and James, who, on his arrival here, must have been dazzled by a splendour foreign to the poverty of his native kingdom, might have been peculiarly ambitious to exhibit before his son-in-law the mimick pomp of an English coronation †. *King Henry VIII.* therefore, after

* Thus *Henry IV. P. I.* was called *Hotspur*; *Henry IV. P. II.* or *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, was exhibited under the name of *Sir John Falstaff*; *Much Ado about Nothing* was new-named *Benedict and Beatrix*; and *Julius Cæsar* seems to have been represented under the title of *Cæsar's Tragedy*.

† The Prince Palatine was not present at the representation of *King Henry VIII.* on the 30th of June, O. S. when the Globe playhouse was burnt down, having left England some

after having lain by for some years unacted, on account of the costliness of the exhibition, might have been revived in 1613, under the title of *All is True*, with new decorations, and a new prologue and epilogue. Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, that the prologue has two or three direct references to this title; a circumstance which authorises us to conclude, almost with certainty, that it was an occasional production, written some years after the composition of the play. *King Henry VIII.* not being then published, the fallacy of calling it a new play on its revival, was not easily detected.

Dr. Johnson long since suspected, from the contemptuous manner in which “*the noise of targets, and the fellow in a long motley coat,*” or, in other words, most of our author’s plays, are spoken of in this prologue, that it was not the composition of Shakspeare, but written after his departure from the stage, on some accidental revival of *King Henry VIII.* by B. Jonson, whose style it seemed to him to resemble*.

Dr.

some time before. But the play might have been revived for his entertainment in the beginning of the year 1613; and might have been occasionally represented afterwards.

* In support of this conjecture it may be observed, that Ben Jonson has in many places endeavoured to ridicule our author, for representing battles on the stage. So, in his prologue to *Every Man in his Humour*:

Hh ij

—“ Yet

Dr. Farmer is of the same opinion, and thinks he sees something of Jonson's hand, here and there, in the dialogue also. After our author's retirement to the country, Jonson was perhaps employed to give a
novelty

—" Yet ours for want hath not so lov'd the stage,
As he dare serve the *ill customs* of the age,
Or purchase your delight at such a rate,
As, for it, he himself must justly hate ;
To make, &c. —————

————— or with three rusty swords,
And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
And in the tiring-house bring wounds to scars."

Again, in his *Silent Woman*, Act IV. Sc. iv.

" Nay, I would sit out a play, that were nothing but fights at sea, drum, trumpet, and *target*."

We are told, in the memoirs of Ben Jonson's life, that he went to France in the year 1613. But at the time of the revival of *King Henry VIII.* he either had not left England, or was then returned ; for he was a spectator of the fire which happened at the Globe theatre during the representation of that piece.

It may, perhaps, seem extraordinary, that he should have presumed to prefix this covert censure of Shakspeare to one of his own plays. But he appears to have eagerly embraced every opportunity of depreciating him. This occasional prologue (whoever was the writer of it) confirms the tradition handed down by Rowe, that our author retired from the stage about three years before his death.

Had

novelty to the piece by a new title and prologue, and to furnish the managers of the Globe with a description of the coronation ceremony, and of those other decorations with which, from his connection with

Had he been at that time joined with Heminge and Burbage in the management of the Globe theatre, he scarcely would have suffered the lines, above alluded to, to have been spoken. In lord Harrington's account of the money disbursed for the plays that were exhibited by his Majesty's servants, in the year 1613, before the Elector Palatine, all the payments are said to have been made to "*John Heminge*, for himself and the rest of his fellows;" from which we may conclude that he was then the principal manager. A correspondent, however, of Sir Thomas Puckering's (as I learn from Mr. Tyrwhitt) in a MS. letter preserved in the Museum, and dated in the year 1613, calls the company at the Globe, "*Bourbage's* company."—Shakspeare's name stands before either of these in the licence granted by king James; and, had he not left London before that time, the players at the Globe theatre, I should imagine, would rather have been entitled *his* company.—The burlesque parody on the account of Falstaff's death, which is contained in Fletcher's comedy of *The Captain*, acted in 1613, and the ridicule of Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy, and of Ophelia's death, in his *Scornful Lady*, which was represented about the same time, confirm the tradition, that our author had then retired from the stage, careless of the fate of his writings, inattentive to the illiberal attacks of his contemporaries, and negligent alike of present and posthumous fame.

Inigo Jones, and his attendance at court, he was peculiarly conversant.

The piece appears to have been revived with some degree of splendour; for Sir Henry Wotton gives a very pompous account of the representation. The unlucky accident that happened to the house during the exhibition, was occasioned by discharging some small pieces, called chambers, on king Henry's arrival at cardinal Wolsey's gate at Whitehall, one of which, being injudiciously managed, set fire to the thatched roof of the theatre*.

The

* The Globe theatre (as I learn from the MSS. of Mr. Oldys) was thatched with reeds, and had an open area in its centre. This area we may suppose to have been filled by the lowest part of the audience, whom Shakspeare calls the *groundlings*.—*Chambers* are not, like other guns, pointed horizontally, but are discharged as they stand erect on their breeches. The accident may, therefore, be easily accounted for. If these pieces were let off behind the scenes, the paper or wadding, with which their charges were confined, would reach the thatch on the inside; or, if fixed without the walls, it might have been carried by the wind to the top of the roof.

This accident is alluded to in the following lines of Ben Jonson's *Execration upon Vulcan*; from which it appears, that he was at the Globe playhouse when it was burnt, a circumstance which, in some measure, strengthens the conjecture that he was employed on the revival of *King Henry VIII.* for this was not the theatre at which his pieces were usually represented:

“ Well

The play, thus revived and new-named, was probably called, in the bills of that time, a *new* play; which might have led Sir Henry Wotton to describe it as such. And thus his account may be reconciled with that of the other contemporary writers, as well as with those arguments which have been here urged

“ Well fare the wise men yet on the Bank-side,
“ My friends, the watermen! they could provide
“ Against thy fury, when, to serve their needs,
“ They made a Vulcan of a sheaf of reeds;
“ Whom they durst handle in their holy-day coats,
“ And safely trust to dress, not burn their boats.
“ But O those reeds! thy mere disdain of them
“ Made thee beget that cruel stratagem
“ (Which some are pleas'd to style but thy mad prank)
“ Against *the Globe*, the glory of *the Bank*:
“ Which, though it were the fort of the whole parish,
“ Flank'd with a ditch, and forc'd out of a marish,
“ *I saw* with two poor *chambers* taken in,
“ And raz'd; ere thought could urge this might have been.
“ See the world's ruins! nothing but the piles
“ Left, and wit since to cover it with tiles.
“ The brethren, they straight nois'd it out for news,
“ 'Twas verily some relick of the stews,
“ And this a sparkle of that fire let loose,
“ That was lock'd up in the Winchestrian goose,
“ Bred on *the Bank* in time of popery,
“ When Venus there maintain'd her mystery.
“ But others fell, with that conceit, by the ears,
“ And cried, it was a threatning to the bears,
“ And that accursed ground, *the Paris garden*, &c.”

in support of the early date of *King Henry VIII.* Every thing has been fully stated on each side of the question—The reader must judge.

Mr. Roderick, in his notes on our author (appended to Mr. Edwards's *Canons of Criticism*), takes notice of some peculiarities in the metre of the play before us; viz. “*that there are many more verses in it than in any other, which end with a redundant syllable*”—“*very near two to one*”—and that “*the cæsurae, or pauses of the verse, are full as remarkable.*” The redundancy, &c. observed by this critick, Mr. Steevens thinks (a remark which, having omitted to introduce in its proper place, he desires me to insert here), “*was rather the effect of chance, than of design in the author; and might have arisen either from the negligence of Shakspeare, who in this play has borrowed whole scenes and speeches from Holinshed, whose words he was probably in too much haste to compress into versification strictly regular and harmonious; or from the interpolations of Ben Jonson, whose hand Dr. Farmer thinks he occasionally perceives in the dialogue.*”

Whether Mr. Roderick's position be well founded, is hardly worth a contest; but the peculiarities which he has animadverted on (if such there be), add probability to the conjecture, that this piece underwent some alterations, after it had passed out of the hands of Shakspeare.

Our author had produced so many plays in the preceding years, that it is not likely that *King Henry VIII.* was written *before 1601.* It might, perhaps, with
equal

equal propriety, be ascribed to 1602, and it is not easy to determine in which of those years it was composed; but it is extremely probable that it was written in one of them. It was not printed till 1623.

A book or poem, called "The Life and Death of Thomas Woolsey Cardinall," which was entered on the books of the Stationers-Company, in the year 1599, perhaps suggested this subject to Shakspeare.

24. *TROILUS AND CRESSIDA*, 1602.

Troilus and Cressida was entered at Stationers-Hall, Feb. 7, 1602-3, by J. Roberts, the Printer of *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. It was therefore, probably, written in 1602. It was printed in 1609, with a preface by the editor, who speaks of it as if it had not been then acted. But it is entered in 1602-3, "as acted by my Lord Chamberlen's men." The players at the Globe theatre, to which Shakspeare belonged, were called *the Lord Chamberlain's servants*, till the year 1603. In that year they obtained a licence for their exhibitions from king James; and from that time they bore the more honourable appellation of *his Majesty's servants*. There can, therefore, be little doubt, that the *Troilus and Cressida* *, which is here entered as acted at Shakspeare's theatre,

* No other play with this title has come down to us. We have, therefore, a right to conclude, that the play entered in the books of the Stationers-Company was Shakspeare's.

was

was his play, and was, if not represented, intended to have been represented there.

Perhaps the two discordant accounts, relative to this piece, may be thus reconciled. It might have been performed in 1602 at *court*, by the lord chamberlain's servants (as many plays at that time were), and yet not have been exhibited on the publick stage till some years afterwards. The editor in 1609 only says, "it had never been staled with the *stage*, never clapper-claw'd with the palms of the *vulgar*."

As a further proof of the early appearance of *Troilus and Cressida*, it may be observed, that an incident in it seems to be burlesqued in a comedy entitled *Histriomastix*, which, though not printed till 1610, must have been written before the death of queen Elizabeth, who, in the last act of the piece, is shadowed under the character of Astræa; and is spoken of as then living.

In our author's play, when Troilus and Cressida part, he gives her his sleeve; and she, in return, presents him with her glove.

To this circumstance these lines in *Histriomastix* seem to refer. They are spoken by Troilus and Cressida, who are introduced in an interlude:

Troi. "Come, Cressida, my cresset light,
Thy face doth shine both day and night.
Behold, behold, *thy garter blue*
Thy knight his valiant elbow weares,
That, when he shakes his furious speare,

The

The foe in shivering fearful sort
May lay him down in death to snort.

Cress. O knight, with valour in thy face,
Here take my skreene, weare it for grace;
Within thy helmet put the same,
Therewith to make thy enemies lame."

Dryden supposed *Troilus and Cressida* to have been one of Shakspeare's earliest performances*, but has not mentioned on what principles he founded his judgment. Pope, on the other hand, thought it one of his last; grounding his opinion not only on the preface by the editor in 1609, but on "the great number of observations, both moral and political, with which this piece is crowded, more than any other of our author's." For my own part, were it not for the entry in the Stationers' books, I should have been led, both by the colour of the writing and by the above-mentioned preface, to class it (though not one of our author's happiest effusions) in 1608, rather than in that year in which it is here placed.

* The tragedy which I have undertaken to correct was, in all probability, one of his *first endeavours* on the stage. — Shakspeare (as I hinted) *in the apprenticeship of his writing*, modelled it [the story of Lollus] into that play which is now called by the name of *Troilus and Cressida*." — Dryden's preface to *Troilus and Cressida*.

25. *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, 1603.

This play was not registered at Stationers-Hall, nor printed, till 1623. But from two passages in it, which seem intended as a courtly apology for the stately and ungracious demeanour of king James I. on his entry into England, it appears probable that it was written soon after his accession to the throne :

“ I'll privily away. I love the people,
 “ But do not like to stage me to their eyes.
 “ Though it do well, I do not relish well
 “ Their loud applause, and aves vehement;
 “ Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
 “ That does affect it.”

Measure for Measure, Act I. Sc. i.

Again, Act II. Sc. iv.

—————“ So
 “ The general, subject to a well-wish'd king,
 “ Quit their own part, and in obsequious fondness
 “ Croud to his presence, where their untaught love
 “ Must needs appear offence *.”

King James was *so much offended* by the *untaught*, and, we may add, undeserved, gratulations of his

* See Mr. Tyrwhitt's note.

subjects, on his entry into England, that he issued a proclamation, forbidding the people to resort to him. —“ Afterwards,” says the historian of his reign, “ in his publick appearances, especially in his sports, the accesses of the people made him so impatient, that he often dispersed them with frowns, that we may not say with *curses**.”

That *Measure for Measure* was written before 1607, may be fairly concluded from the following passage in a poem published in that year, which we have good ground to believe was copied from a similar thought in this play, as the author, at the end of his piece, professes a personal regard for Shakspeare, and highly praises his *Venus and Adonis* † :

* Wilson's *History of King James*, ad ann. 1603.

† See the verses alluded to, ante p. 268. note.

This writer does not seem to have been very scrupulous about adopting either the thoughts or expressions of his contemporaries; for in this poem are found two lines taken verbatim from Marston's *Insatiate Countess*, printed four years before *Myrrha the Mother of Adonis*, &c.

“ Night like a masque was enter'd heaven's great hall,
“ With thousand torches ushering the way.”

It appears from B. Jonson's *Silent Woman*, that W. Barksted was an actor, and was employed in the theatre where our author's plays were represented. He might, therefore, have performed a part in *Measure for Measure*, or have seen the copy before it was printed.

“ So play the foolish *throngs* with one that *swoons* ;
 “ Come all to *help* him, and so stop the *air*
 “ By which he should revive.”

Measure for Measure, ACT II. Sc. iv.

“ And, like as when some sudden extasie
 “ Seizeth the nature of a sicklie man ;
 “ When he's discern'd to *swoune*, strait by and by
 “ Folke to his *helpe* confusedly have ran,
 “ And seeking with their art to fetch him backe,
 “ So many *throng* that he the *ayre* doth lacke.”

Myrrha the Mother of Adonis, or Luste's Prodigies,
 by William Barksted, a poem, 1607.

26. CYMBELINE, 1604.

Cymbeline was not entered on the Stationers' books, nor printed, till 1623. It stands the *last* play in the earliest folio edition ; but nothing can be collected from thence ; for the folio editors manifestly paid no attention to chronological arrangement. Not containing any intrinsick evidence by which its date might be ascertained, it is attributed to this year, chiefly because there is no proof that any other play was written by Shakspeare in 1604. And as in the course of somewhat more than twenty years, he produced, according to some, forty-three, in the opinion of others, thirty-five dramas, we may presume that he was not idle during any one year of that time.

This

This play was perhaps alluded to, in an old comedy, called *The Return from Parnassus* :

“ Frame, as well we might, with easy strain,
 “ With far more praise, and, with as little pain,
 “ Stories of love, where ’fore the wond’ring bench
 “ The lisping gallant might enjoy his wench ;
 “ Or make some sire acknowledge his lost son *,
 “ Found, when the weary act is almost done.”

If the author of this piece had *Cymbeline* in contemplation, it must have been more ancient than it is here supposed ; for from several passages in *The Return from Parnassus*, that comedy appears to have been written before the death of queen Elizabeth, which happened on the 24th of March 1603.

Mr. Steevens has observed, that there is a passage in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Philaster*, which bears a strong resemblance to a speech of Jachimo in *Cymbeline* :

“ I hear the tread of people : I am hurt ;
 “ The Gods take part against me : could this boor
 “ Have held me thus, else ?”

Philaster, Act IV. Sc. i.

* In the last act of *Cymbeline*, two sons are found. But the author might have written *son* on account of the rhyme.

————— “ I have bely'd a lady
 “ The princess of this country ; *and the air of't*
 “ *Revengingly enfeebles me ; or could this carle,*
 “ *A very drudge of nature, have subdu'd me*
 “ *In my profession ?*”

Cymbeline, Act V. Sc. ii.

Philaster is supposed to have appeared on the stage about 1609 : being mentioned by John Davies of Hereford, in his *Epigrams*, which have no date, but were printed, according to Oldys, in or about that year*.

One edition of the tract called *Westward for Smelts*, from which part of the fable of *Cymbeline* is borrowed, was published in 1603.

27. *KING LEAR*, 1605.

The tragedy of *King Lear* was entered on the books of the Stationers-Company, Nov. 26, 1607, and is there mentioned to have been played the preceding Christmas, before his Majesty at Whitehall. But this, I conjecture, was not its first exhibition. It seems extremely probable, that its first appearance was in 1605 ; in which year the old play of *King Leir*, that had been entered at Stationers-Hall in 1594, was

* *Additions to Langbaine's Account of the Dramatick Poets.*
 MS.

printed by Simon Stafford, for John Wright, who, we may presume, finding Shakspeare's play successful, hoped to palm the spurious one on the publick for his *.

Our author's *King Lear* was not published till 1608, Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, from which Shakspeare borrowed some fantastick names of spirits, mentioned in this play, was printed in 1603.

28. *MACBETH*, 1606.

From a book, entitled *Rex Platonicus*, cited by Dr. Farmer, we learn that king James, when he visited Oxford in 1605, was addressed by three students of St. John's College, who personated the three weird sisters, and recited a short dramatick poem, founded on the prediction of those sibyls (as the author calls them) relative to Banquo and Macbeth.

Dr. Farmer is of opinion, that this little piece † preceded Shakspeare's play; a supposition which is strengthened by the silence of the author of *Rex Platonicus*, who, if *Macbeth* had then appeared on the

* Shakspeare has copied one of the passages in this old play. This he might have done, though we should suppose it not to have been published till after his *King Lear* was written and acted; for the old play had been in possession of the stage for many years before 1605.

† In *Rex Platonicus* it is called *Lusiuncula*.

stage, would probably have mentioned something of it. It should be likewise remembered, that there subsisted at that time a spirit of opposition and rivalry between the regular players and the academicks of the two universities; the latter of whom frequently acted plays both in Latin and English, and seem to have piqued themselves on the superiority of their exhibitions to those of the established theatres *. Wishing probably to manifest this superiority to the royal pedant, it is not likely that they would choose, for a collegiate interlude, a subject which had already appeared on the public stage, with all the embellishments that the magick hand of Shakspeare could bestow.

This tragedy contains an allusion to the union of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, under one sovereign, and also to the cure of the

* Ab ejusdem collegii alumni (qui et cothurno tragico et socco comico principes semper habebantur) *Vertumnus*, comœdia faceta, ad principes exhilarandos exhibetur. *Rex Platonicus*, p. 78.

Arcadium restauratam Isiacorum Arcadum lectissimi cecinerunt, unoque opere, principum omniumque spectantium animos immensâ et ultra fidem affecerunt voluptate; simulque patrios ludiones, etsi exercitatissimos, quantum intersit inter scenam mercenariam & eruditam docuerunt, *Ib.* p. 228. See also the lines quoted above from *The Return from Parnassus*, and Act IV. Sc. iii. of that piece, which was acted publickly at St. John's-College in Cambridge.

king's-

king's-evil by the royal touch * ; but in what year that pretended power was assumed by king James I. is uncertain. *Macbeth* was not entered in the Stationers' books, nor printed, till 1623.

In *The Tragedy of Cæsar and Pompey, or Cæsar's Revenge*, are these lines :

“ Why think you, lords, that 'tis *ambition's* spur
 “ That *pricketh* Cæsar to these high attempts ? ”

If the author of that play, which was published in 1607, should be thought to have had *Macbeth's* soliloquy in view (which is not unlikely), this circumstance may add some degree of probability to the supposition that this tragedy had appeared before that year :

————— “ I have no *spur*
 “ To *prick* the sides of my intent, but only
 “ Vaulting *ambition*, which o'er-leaps itself
 “ And falls at the other ” ———

At the time when *Macbeth* is supposed to have been written, the subject, it is probable, was considered as a topick the most likely to conciliate the favour of the court. In the additions to *Warner's Albion's England*, which were first printed in 1606, the story of “ *The Three Fairies, or Weird Elves*,” as he calls them, is shortly told, and king James's descent from Banquo carefully deduced.

* *Macbeth*, Act IV. Sc. i. ii.

Ben Jonson, a few years afterwards, paid his court to his Majesty by his *Masque of Queens**, presented at Whitehall, February 12, 1609; in which he has given a minute detail of all the magick rites that are recorded by king James in his book of *Dæmonologie*, or by any other author ancient or modern.

Mr. Steevens has lately discovered a MS. play, entitled *THE WITCH*, written by Thomas Middleton†, which renders it questionable, whether Shakspeare was not indebted to that author for the first hint of the magick introduced in this tragedy. The reader will find an account of this single curiosity in the note.

* Mr. Upton was of opinion that this masque preceded *Macbeth*. But the only ground that he states for this conjecture, is, “that Jonson’s pride would not suffer him to borrow from Shakspeare, though he stole from the ancients.”

† In an advertisement prefixed to an edition of *A Mad World my Masters*, a comedy by Thomas Middleton, 1640, the printer says, that the author was “*long since dead*.” Middleton probably died soon after the year 1626. He was chronologer to the city of London, and it does not appear that any masque or pageant, in honour of the Lord-Mayor, was set forth by him after that year*. From the dates of his printed plays, and from the ensuing verses on

* *The Triumph of Health and Prosperity at the Inauguration of the most worthy Brother, the Right Hon. Cutbert Hasket, draper; composed by Thomas Middleton, draper, 1626, 4to.*

his

note*.—To the observations of Mr. Steevens I have only to add, that the songs, beginning, *Come away, &c.* and *Black spirits, &c.* being found at full length in

his last performance, by Sir William Lower, we may conclude, that he was as early a writer, and at least as old, as Shakspeare :

“ *Tom Middleton* his numerous issue brings,
 “ And his last muse delights us when she sings :
 “ His halting age a pleasure doth impart,
 “ And his white locks shew master of his art.”

The following dramattick pieces, by Middleton, appear to have been published in his life-time.—*Your Five Gallants*, no date.—*Blunt Master Constable, or the Spaniard's Night Walke*, 1602.—*Michaelmas Term*, 1607.—*The Phoenix*, 1607.—*The Family of Love*, 1608.—*A Trick to catch the Old One*, 1608.—*A Mad World my Masters*, 1608.—*The Roaring Girl, or Moll Cutpurse*, 1611.—*Fair Quarrel*, 1617.—*A Chaste Maid of Cheapside*, 1620.—*A Game at Chesse*, 1625.—Most of his other plays were printed, about thirty years after his death, by Kirkman and other booksellers, into whose hands his manuscripts fell.

* In a former note on this tragedy, I have said that the original edition contains only the two first words of the song in the 4th act, beginning *Black spirits, &c.* but have lately discovered the entire stanza in an unpublished dramattick piece, viz. “ A Tragi-Coomodie called *THE WITCH*; long since acted by his Majesties Servants at the Black Friars; written by *Tho. Middleton*.” The song is there called—“ A charme-song, about a vessel.” The other

in *The Witch*, while only the two first words of them are printed in *Macbeth*, favour the supposition that Middleton's

other song omitted in the 5th scene of the third act of *Macbeth*, together with the imperfect couplet there, may likewise be found, as follows, in Middleton's performance.
—The *Hecate* of *Shakspeare*, says:—

“ I am for the air, &c.”

The *Hecate* of Middleton (who like the former is summoned away by aerial spirits) has the same declaration in almost the same words:—“ I am for aloft, &c.

“ Song.] Come away, come away: } *in the aire.*
“ *Heccat, Heccat*, come away.

“ *Hec.* I come, I come, I come,
“ With all the speed I may,
“ With all the speed I may.

“ Wher's *Stadlin*?
“ *Heere.*] *in the aire.*

“ Wher's *Puckle*?
“ *Heere.*] *in the aire.*

“ And *Hoppo* too, and *Hellwaine* too, }
“ We lack but you, we lack but you: } *in the aire.*
“ Come away, make up the count.

“ *Hec.* I will but 'noynt, and then I mount,

“ A spirit like } There's one comes downe to fetch
a cat descends } his dues,
A kisse, a coll, a sip of blood: }
And why thou staist so long } *above.*
“ I muse, I muse,
“ Since the aire's so sweet and good. }
“ *Hec.*

Middleton's piece preceded that of Shakspeare; the latter, it should seem, thinking it unnecessary to set down verses which were probably well known, and perhaps then in the possession of the managers of the Globe

" *Hec.* Oh, art thou come?

" What newes, what newes?

" All goes still to our delight,

" Either come, or els

Refuse, refuse.

} *above.*

" *Hec.*] Now I am furnish'd for the flight.

" *Fire.*] Hark, hark, the catt sings a brave treble in her owne language.

" *Hec. going up.* Now I goe, now I flie,

" *Malkin* my sweete spirit and I,

" Oh what a daintie pleasure 'tis

" To ride in the aire,

" When the moone shines faire,

" And sing, and daunce, and toy and kiss!

" Over woods, high rocks, and mountains,

" Over seas, our mistris' fountains,

" Over steepe towres and turrets,

" We fly bynight 'amongst troopes of spiritts.

" No ring of bells to our eares sounds,

" No howles of woolves, no yelpes of hounds;

" No, not the noyse of waters'-breache,

" Or cannons' throat, our height can reache.

" No ring of bells, &c.] *above.*

" *Fire.*] Well mother, I thank your kindness: you must be gambolling i' th'aire, and leave me to walk here, like a fool and a mortall. *Exit,* *Finis Actus Tertii."*

This

Globe theatre. The high reputation of Shakspeare's performances (to mention a circumstance which in the
course

This *Fire-stone*, who occasionally interposes in the course of the dialogue, is called, in the list of Persons Represented—"The *Clowne* and *Heccat's* son."

Again, the *Hecate* of *Shakspeare* says to her sisters:—

"I'll charm the *air* to give a sound,

"While you perform your antique round, &c."

[*Musick. The Witches dance and vanish.*]

The *Hecate* of *Middleton* says on a similar occasion:

"Come, my sweete sisters, let the *aire* strike our tune,

"Whilst we shew reverence to yond peeping moone."

[*Here they dance and Exeunt.*]

In this play, the motives which incline the witches to mischief, their manners, the contents of their cauldron, &c. seem to have more than accidental resemblance to the same particulars in *Macbeth*. The hags of *Middleton*, like the weird sisters of *Shakspeare*, destroy cattle because they have been refused provisions at farm-houses. The owl and the cat (*Grey Malkin*) give them notice when it is time to proceed on their several expeditions.—Thus *Shakspeare's* Witch:—

"Harper cries;—'tis time, 'tis time."

Thus too the *Hecate* of *Middleton*:—

"*Hec.*] Heard you the owle yet?

"*Stad.*] Briefely in the copps.

"*Hec.*] 'Tis high time for us then."

The

course of these observations will be more than once insisted upon) likewise strengthens this conjecture; for it is very improbable, that Middleton, or any other poet of that time, should have ventured into those

The *Hecate* of *Shakspeare*, addressing her sisters, observes, that Macbeth is but *a wayward son, who loves for his own ends, not for them*. The *Hecate* of Middleton has the same observation, when the youth who has been consulting her retires:

“ I know he loves me not, nor there's no hope on't.”

Instead of the *grease that's sweaten from the murderer's gibbet*, and the *finger of birth-strangled babe*, the witches of Middleton employ “ the gristle of a man that *hangs after sun-set*,” (i. e. of a murderer, for all other criminals were anciently cut down before evening) and the “ fat of an unbaptized child.” They likewise boast of the power to raise tempests that shall blow down trees, overthrow buildings, and occasion shipwreck; and, more particularly, that they can “ *make miles of woods walk*.” Here too the Grecian *Hecate* is degraded into a presiding witch, and exercised in superstitions peculiar to our own country. So much for the scenes of enchantment; but even other parts of Middleton's play coincide more than once with that of *Shakspeare*. Lady Macbeth says, in act II.

“ ——— the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with *snores*. I have drugg'd
their *possets*.” ———

those regions of fiction, in which our author had *already* expatiated :

— “ Shakspeare's magick could not *copy'd* be,
Within that circle none durst walk but he.”

Other

So too *Francisca* in the piece of *Middleton* :

“ ——— they're now all at rest,
“ And Gasper there and all :—List !—fast asleepe ;
“ He *cryes* it hither.——I must disease you straight,
Sir ;
“ For the maide-servants, and the girles o'th' house,
“ I *spic'd* them lately with a *drowsie posset*,
“ They will not hear in haste.”——

And *Francisca*, like lady *Macbeth*, is watching late at night to encourage the perpetration of a murder.

The expression which *Shakspeare* has put into the mouth of *Macbeth*, when he is sufficiently recollected to perceive that the dagger and the blood on it were the creations of his own fancy,——“ There's no such thing !”——is likewise appropriated to *Francisca*, when she undeceives her brother, whose imagination had been equally abused.

From the instances already produced, perhaps the reader would allow, that if *Middleton's* piece preceded *Shakspeare's*, the originality of the magick introduced by the latter might be fairly questioned ; for our author (who, as actor, and manager, had access to unpublished dramatick performances) has so often condescended to receive hints from his contemporaries, that our suspicion of his having been a copyist, in the present instance, might not be without foundation.

Other pieces of equal antiquity may, perhaps, be hereafter discovered, for the names of several ancient plays are preserved, which are not known to have been ever printed. Thus we hear of *Valentine and Orson*, plaied
by

dation. Nay, perhaps, a time may arrive, in which it will become evident from books and manuscripts, yet undiscovered and unexamined, that *Shakspeare* never attempted a play on any argument, till the effect of the same story, or at least the ruling incidents in it, had been already tried on the stage, and familiarized to his audience. Let it be remembered, in support of this conjecture, that dramatick pieces on the following subjects,—viz. *King John*, *King Richard II. and III.* *King Henry IV. and V.* *King Henry VIII.* *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, and *The Comedy of Errors*,—had appeared before those of *Shakspeare*, and that he has taken somewhat from all of them that we have hitherto seen. I must observe, at the same time, that *Middleton*, in his other dramas, is found to have borrowed little from the sentiments, and nothing from the fables of his predecessors. He is known to have written in concert with *Jonson*, *Fletcher*, *Massinger*, and *Rowley*; but appears to have been unacquainted, or at least unconnected, with *Shakspeare*.

It is true that the date of *THE WITCH* cannot be ascertained. The author, however, in his dedication (*to the trulie-worthie and generously-affected Thomas Holmes, Esquire*) observes, that he *recovered this ignorant-ill-fated labour of his* (from the play-house, I suppose) *not without much difficultie.* *Witches* (continues he) *are, ipso facto, by the law condemn'd,*

by her Majestie's players—The tragedy of *Ninus and Semiramis*—*Titirus and Galathea*—*Godfrey of Bulloigne*—*The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*—*The Cradle of Securitie*—*Hit the Nailo' the Head*—*Sir Thomas More*—(Harl. MS. 7368)—*The Isle of Dogs*, by Thomas Nashe—The comedy of *Fidele and Fortunatus*—The famous tragedy of *The Destruction*

and that onely, I thinck, hath made her lie so long in an imprison'd obscuritie. It is probable, therefore, from these words, as well as from the title-page, that the play was written *long** before the dedication, which seems to have been added soon after the year 1603, when the act of K. James against witches passed into a law. If it be objected, that THE WITCH appears from this title-page to have been acted only by his Majesty's servants, let it be remembered that these were the very players, who had been before in the service of the Queen; but Middleton, dedicating his work in the time of James, speaks of them only as dependants on the reigning prince.

Here too it may be remarked, that the first dramattick piece, in which Middleton is known to have had a hand, viz. *The old Law*, was acted in 1599; so that THE WITCH might have been composed, if not performed, at an earlier

* That dramattick pieces were sometimes written *long* before they were printed, may be proved from the example of Marlowe's *Rich Jew of Malta*, which was entered on the books of the Stationers-Company in the year 1594, but was not published till 1633, as we learn from the preface to it written by Heywood. It appears likewise, from the same registers, that several plays were written, that were never published at all.

period

struction of Jerusalem, by Dr. Legge—*The Freman's Honour*, by William Smith—*Mahomet and Irene the Faire Greek*—*The Play of the Cards*—*Cardenio*—*The Knaves*—*The Knot of Fools*—*Raymond Duke of Lyons*—*The Nobleman*,
by

period * than the accession of *James* to the crown; for the belief of witchcraft was sufficiently popular in the preceding reigns. The piece in question might likewise have been neglected through the caprice of players, or retarded till it could be known that *James* would permit such representations (for on his arrival here, both authors and actors, who should have ventured to bring the midnight mirth and jollity of witches on the stage, would probably have been indicted as favourers of magick and enchantment); or, it might have shrunk into obscurity after the appearance of *Macbeth*; or perhaps was forbidden by the command of the king. The witches of *Shakspeare* (exclusive of the flattering circumstance to which their prophecy alludes) are solemn in their operations, and therefore behaved in conformity to his Majesty's own opinions. On the contrary, the hags of *Middleton* are ludicrous in their conduct, and lessen, by ridiculous combinations of images, the solemnity of that magick in which our sceptered persecutor of old women most reverently and potently believed.

The conclusion to *Middleton's* dedication has likewise a degree of singularity that deserves notice.—“For your

* The spelling in the MS. is sometimes more antiquated than any to be met with in the printed copies of *Shakspeare*, as the following instances may prove:—*Byn* for *been*—*solempnely* for *solemnly*—*dampnation* for *damnation*—*quight* for *quite*—*grizzle* for *gristle*—*doa* for *doe*—*ollyff* for *olive*, &c.

by Cyril Tounneur—[the five last acted in the year 1613];—*The honoured Loves—The Parliament of Love—*
and

sake alone, she hath thus conjur'd herself abroad; and beares no other charmes about her, but what may tend to your recreation; nor no other spell, but to possess you with a belief, that as she, so he, that *first* taught her to enchant, will alwaies be, &c."—"He that taught her to enchant," would have sufficiently expressed the obvious meaning of the writer, without aid from the word *first*, which seems to imply a covert censure on some person who had engaged his *Hecate* in a *secondary* course of witchcraft.

The reader must have inferred from the specimen of incantation already given, that this MS. play (which was purchased by *Major Pearson* out of the collection of one *Griffin*, a player, and is in all probability the presentation copy) had indubitably passed through the hands of Sir *William Davenant*; for almost all the additions which he pretends to have made to the scenes of witchcraft in *Macbeth* (together with the names of the supplemental agents) are adopted from *Middleton*. It was not the interest therefore, of Sir *William*, that this piece should ever appear in print: but time, that makes important discoveries, has likewise brought his petty plagiarism to light*.

* Sir *William Davenant* might likewise have formed his play of *Albovine King of Lombardy* on some of the tragick scenes in this unpublished piece by *Middleton*. Yet the chief circumstances on which they are both founded occur in the fourth volume of the *Histoires Tragiques, &c. par François de Belle forest*, 1580, p. 297, and at the beginning of *Machiavel's Florentine History*. STEEVENS.

I should

and *Nonsuch*, a comedy; all by William Rowley;—*The Pilgrimage to Parnassus*, by the author of *The Return from Parnassus*—*Believe as you List*, by Massinger—*The Pirate*, by Davenport—*Rosania, or Love's Victory*, a comedy by Shirley (some of whose plays were extant in MS. in Langbaine's time);—*The Twins*, a tragedy, acted in 1613—*Tancredo*, a tragedy, by Sir Henry Wotton—*Demetrius and Marsina, or The Imperial Impostor and unhappy Heroine*, a tragedy—*The Tyrant*, a tragedy—*The Queen of Corsica*—*The Bugbears*—*The Second Maid's Tragedy*—*Timon*, a comedy—*Catiline's Conspiracy*, a tragedy; and *Captain Mario*, a comedy, both by Stephen Gosson;—*The True Historie of George Scanderbeg*, as played by the right honourable the Earl of Oxenford's servants—*Jane Shore*—*The Bold Beau-champs*—*The Second Part of Sir John Oldcastle*—*The General*—*The Toy*—*The Tell-Tale**, a comedy—*The Woman's Plot*, *The Woman's too hard for Him* [both

I should remark, that Sir W. D. has corrupted several words as well as proper names in the songs, &c. but it were needless to particularize his mistakes, as this entire tragi-comedy will hereafter be published for the satisfaction of the curious and intelligent readers of *Shakspeare*.

STEEVENS.

* The persons represented in this play (which is in my possession) are—Duke, Fidelio, Aspero, Hortensio, Borgia, Picentio, Count Gismond, Fernese, Bentivoglio, Cosmo, Julio, Captain, Lieutenant, Ancient, two Doctors, an Ambassador, Victoria, Elinor, Isabel, Lesbia.—
Scene Florence.

acted

acted at court in 1621];—*The Love-Sick Maid* [acted at court in 1629];—*Fulgius and Lucrelle*—*The Fool Transformed*, a comedy—*The History of Lewis the Eleventh, King of France*, a tragi-comedy—*The Chaste Woman against her Will*, a comedy—*The Tooth-Drawer*, a comedy—*Honour in the End*, a comedy—*The History of Don Quixote, or the Knight of the Ill-favoured Countenance*, a comedy—*The Fair Spanish Captive*, a tragi-comedy—*The tragedy of Heildebrand*—*Love yields to Honour*—*The Noble Friend*, &c. &c. Soon after the Restoration, one Kirkman, a bookseller, printed many dramattick pieces that had remained unpublished for more than sixty years; and, in an advertisement subjoined to “*A true, perfect, and exact catalogue of all the comedies, tragedies, &c. that were ever yet printed and published, till this present year 1671,*” he says, that although there were, at that time, but eight hundred and six plays in print, yet many more had been written and acted, and that “*he himself had some quantity in manuscript.*”—The resemblance between *Macbeth* and this newly discovered piece by Middleton naturally suggests a wish, that if any of the unpublished plays, above enumerated, be yet in being (besides *Timon*, *Sir Thomas More*, and *the Second Maid’s Tragedy*, which are known to be extant), their possessors would condescend to examine them with attention; as hence, perhaps, new lights might be thrown on others of our author’s plays.

29. *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*, 1606.

The Taming of a Shrew, which, together with *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Love's Labour Lost*, was entered at Stationers-Hall, by Nich. Ling, January 22, 1606-7, was not, I believe, Shakspeare's play, but the old comedy of the same name, on which our author's piece was manifestly formed. Nich. Ling never printed either *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Love's Labour Lost*; though in the books of the Stationers-Company they were entered by him. The *old Taming of a Shrew*, which had been originally entered in 1594, and perhaps soon afterwards printed*, was republished in 1607, by Nich. Ling. As it bore the same title with Shakspeare's play (*which was not printed till 1623*), the hope of getting a sale for it, under the shelter of a celebrated name, was probably the inducement to issue it out at that time: and its publication *then* gives weight to the supposition that Shakspeare's play was written and first acted in the latter end of the year 1606. It was entered by John Smythwick, November 19, 1607; from which circumstance,

* From a passage in a tract written by Sir John Harrington, entitled *The Metamorphoses of Ajax*, 1596, this old play appears to have been printed before that year, though no edition of so early a date has hitherto been discovered. “*Read the booke of Taming a Shrew, which hath made a number of us so perfect, that now every one can rule a shrew in our country, save he that hath hir.*”

we

we may conclude, that he had procured a copy of it, and had then thoughts of publishing it. It was not, however, printed by him till 1631, eight years after it had appeared in the edition of the players in folio.

30. *JULIUS CÆSAR*, 1607.

A tragedy on the subject, and with the title of *Julius Cæsar*, written by Mr. William Alexander, who was afterwards Earl of Sterline, was printed in the year 1607. This, I imagine, was prior to our author's performance. Shakspeare, we know, formed seven or eight plays on fables that had been unsuccessfully managed by other poets*; but no contemporary writer was daring enough to enter the lists with him in his life-time, or to model into a drama a subject that had already employed his pen; and it is not likely that Lord Sterline, who was then a very young man, and had scarcely unlearned the Scottish idiom, should have been more hardy than any other poet of that age.

I am aware, it may be objected, that this writer might have formed a drama on this story, not knowing that Shakspeare had previously composed the tragedy of *Julius Cæsar*; and that, therefore, the publi-

* See a note on *Julius Cæsar*, Act I. Sc. i. in which they are enumerated,

cation of Mr. Alexander's play in 1607 is no proof that our author's performance did not then exist.—In answer to this objection, it may, perhaps, be sufficient to observe, that Mr. Alexander had, before that year, very wisely left the bleak fields of Menstrie in Clackmananshire, for a warmer and more courtly residence in London, having been appointed gentleman of the privy chamber to prince Henry, in which situation his literary curiosity must have been gratified by the earliest notice of the productions of his brother dramatists.

Lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar*, though not printed till 1607, might have been written a year or two before; and perhaps its publication in that year was in consequence of our author's play on the same subject being then first exhibited. The same observation may be made with respect to an anonymous performance, called *The Tragedie of Cæsar and Pompey, or Cæsar's Revenge**, which was likewise printed in 1607. The subject of that piece is the defeat of Pompey at Pharsalia, the death of Julius, and the final overthrow of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. The attention of the town being, perhaps, drawn to the history of *the hook-nosed fellow of Rome*, by the exhibition of our au-

* This play, as appears by the title-page, was privately acted by the students of Trinity-College in Oxford. In the running title it is called *The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar*; perhaps the better to impose it on the publick for the performance of Shakspeare,

thor's *Julius Cæsar*, the booksellers, who printed these two plays, might have flattered themselves with the hope of an expeditious sale for them at that time, especially as Shakspeare's play was not then published.

We have certain proof that *Antony and Cleopatra* was composed before the middle of the year 1608. An attentive review of that play and *Julius Cæsar* will, I think, lead us to conclude that this latter was first written*. Not to insist on the chronology of the story, which would naturally suggest this subject to our author before the other, in *Julius Cæsar* Shakspeare does

* The following passages in *Antony and Cleopatra* (and others of the same kind may perhaps be found) seem to me to discover such a knowledge of the appropriated characters of the persons exhibited in *Julius Cæsar*, and of the events there dilated and enlarged upon, as Shakspeare would necessarily have acquired from having previously written a play on that subject :

“ *Pompey.* — I do not know
 “ Wherefore my father should revengers want,
 “ Having a son and friends, since *Julius Cæsar*,
 “ Who at *Philippi* the good *Brutus* ghosted,
 “ There saw you labouring for him. What was't
 “ That mov'd pale *Cassius* to conspire? And what
 “ Made all-honour'd, honest, Roman *Brutus*,
 “ With the arm'd rest, courtiers of beauteous freedom,
 “ To drench the capitol, but that they would
 “ Have one man but a man?”

So,

does not seem to have been thoroughly possessed of Antony's character. He has, indeed, marked one or two of the striking features of it; but Antony is not fully delineated till he appears in that play which takes its name from him and Cleopatra. The rough sketch would naturally precede the finished picture.

From a passage in the comedy of *Every Woman in her Humour*, which was printed in 1609, we learn, that a droll on the subject of Julius Cæsar had been exhibited before that year. "I have seen (says one of the personages in that comedy), *The City of Nineveh*, and *Julius Cæsar*, acted by mamnets." Most of our ancient drolls and puppet-shews are known to have been regular abridgments of celebrated plays, or particular scenes of them only. It does not appear that lord Sterline's *Julius Cæsar* was ever celebrated, or even acted; neither that nor his other plays being at all calculated for dramatick representation. On the other hand, we know that Shakspeare's *Julius*

So, in another place,

"When Antony found Julius Cæsar dead,
 "He cry'd almost to roaring; and he wept,
 "When at Philippi he found Brutus slain."

Again,

"*Ant.* He at Philippi kept
 "His sword ev'n like a dancer, while I struck
 "The *lean* and *wrinkled* Cassius; and 'twas I
 "That the *mad* Brutus ended."

Cæsar was a very popular piece; Digges, a contemporary writer, having, in his commendatory verses on our author's works, particularly alluded to it, as one of his most applauded performances*. The droll here mentioned was, therefore, probably formed out of Shakspeare's play: and we may presume that it had been in possession of the stage at least a year or two, before it was exhibited in this degraded form. Though the term *mammiets*, in the passage above quoted, should be considered as contemptuously applied to the children of Paul's, or those of the Chapel† (an interpretation which it will commodiously enough admit), the argument with respect to the date of *Julius Cæsar* will still remain in its full force.

In the prologue to *The False One*, by Beaumont and

*“ Nor fire nor cank’ring age, as Naso said
 “ Of his, thy wit-fraught book shall once invade :
 “ Nor shall I e’er believe or think thee dead,
 “ (Though miss’d) until our bankrout stage be sped
 “ (Impossible!) with some new strain, to outdo
 “ Passions of *Juliet* and her *Romeo* ;
 “ Or till I hear a scene more nobly take
 “ Than when thy half-sword parlying Romans spake.”

Verses by L. Digges, prefixed to the first edition of
 our author's plays, in 1623.

† By a similar figure these children are, in *Hamlet*, called
 “ little Eyases.”——

Fletcher, this play is alluded to*; but in what year that tragedy was written, is unknown.

If the date of *The Maid's Tragedy*, by the same authors, were ascertained, it might throw some light on the present inquiry; the quarreling scene between Melantius and his friend being manifestly copied from a similar scene in *Julius Cæsar*. Dryden mentions a tradition (which he might have received from Sir William D'Avenant) that *Philaster* was the first play that brought Beaumont and Fletcher into reputation. That play, as has been already mentioned, was acted about the year 1609. We may therefore presume that *The Maid's Tragedy* did not appear before that year; for we cannot suppose it to have been one of the unsuccessful pieces that preceded *Philaster*. That *The Maid's Tragedy* was written before 1611, is ascertained by a MS. play, now extant, entitled *The SECOND Maid's Tragedy*, which was licensed by Sir

*“ New titles warrant not a play for new,
 “ The subject being old; and 'tis as true,
 “ Fresh and neat matter may with ease be fram'd
 “ Out of their stories that have oft' been nam'd
 “ With glory on the stage. What borrows he
 “ From him that wrought old Priam's tragedy,
 “ That writes his love for Hecuba? Sure to tell
 “ Of Cæsar's amorous heats, and *how he fell*
 “ *In the Capitol*, can never be the same
 “ To the judicious.”

Prologue to the *False One*.

George Buck, on the 31st of October 1611. I believe it never was printed*.

If, therefore, we fix the date of the original *Maid's Tragedy* in 1610, it agrees sufficiently well with that here assigned to *Julius Cæsar*.

It appears by the papers of the late Mr. George Vertue, that a play called *Cæsar's Tragedy* was acted at court before the 10th of April, in the year 1613. This was probably Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, it being much the fashion at that time to alter the titles of his plays.

31. *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*, 1608.

Antony and Cleoptra was entered on the Stationers' books, May 2, 1608; but was not printed till 1623.

In Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, Act IV. Sc. iv. 1609, this play seems to be alluded to:

"*Morose*. Nay, I would sit out a play that were nothing but *fights at sea*, drum, trumpet, and target."

32. *CORIOLANUS*, 1609.

* This tragedy (as I learn from a MS. of Mr. Oldys) was formerly in the possession of John Warburton, Esq. Somerset Herald. It had no author's name to it when it was licensed, but was afterwards ascribed to George Chapman, whose name is erased by another hand, and that of *Shakspeare* inserted.

33. *TIMON*

33. *TIMON of ATHENS*, 1610.

These two plays, which were neither entered in the books of the Stationers-Company, nor printed, till 1623, are classed here only on the principle mentioned in a preceding article *. Shakspeare, in the course of about twenty years, produced thirty-five dramas. Most of his *other* plays have been attributed, on colourable grounds at least, to *former years*. As we have no proof to ascertain when *these* were written, it seems reasonable to ascribe them to that period, to which we are not led by any particular circumstance to attribute any other of his works; at which, it is supposed, he had not ceased to write; which yet, unless these pieces were then composed, must, for aught that now appears, have been unemployed. When once he had availed himself of North's Plutarch, and had thrown any one of the lives into a dramattick form, he probably found it so easy as to induce him to proceed, till he had exhausted all the subjects which he imagined that book would afford. Hence the four plays of *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon*, are supposed to have been written in succession.

Cominius, in the panegyrick which he pronounces on Coriolanus, says,

——“ In the brunt of seventeen battles since
“ He lurch'd all swords of the garland.”

* Ante, No. 26.

In Ben Johnson's *Silent Woman*, Act V. Sc. last, we meet (as Mr. Steevens has observed) the same uncommon phraseology: "You have *lurch'd* your friends of the better half of *the garland*."

Whether this was a sneer at Shakspeare, or a new phrase of that day, it adds some degree of probability to the date here assigned to *Coriolanus*; for *The Silent Woman* also made its first appearance in 1609.

There is a MS. comedy now extant, on the subject of *Timon*, which, from the hand-writing and the style, appears to be of the age of Shakspeare. In this piece a steward is introduced, under the name of *Laches*, who, like *Flavius* in that of our author, endeavours to restrain his master's profusion, and faithfully attends him when he is forsaken by all his other followers.—Here too a mock-banquet is given by Timon to his false friends; but, instead of warm water, stones painted like artichokes are served up, which he throws at his guests. From a line in Shakspeare's play, one might be tempted to think that something of this sort was introduced by him; though, through the omission of a marginal direction in the only ancient copy of this piece, it has not been customary, to exhibit it:

"*Second Senator.* Lord Timon's mad.

"*3d. Sen.* I feel it on my bones.

"*4th. Sen.* One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones."

This

This comedy (which is evidently the production of a scholar, many lines of Greek being introduced into it) appears to have been written after Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599), to which it contains a reference ; but I have not discovered the precise time when it was composed. If it were ascertained, it might be some guide to us in fixing the date of our author's *Timon*, which, on the grounds that have been already stated*, I suppose to have been posterior to this anonymous play.

34. *OTHELLO*, 1611.

Dr. Warburton thinks that there is in this tragedy a satirical allusion to the institution of the order of Baronets, which dignity was created by king James I. in the year 1611 :

——“The hearts of old gave hands,

“But our new heraldry is hands, not hearts.”

Othello, Act III. Sc. iv.

“Amongst their other prerogatives of honour” (says that commentator), “they [the new-created baronets] had an addition to their paternal arms, of an hand *gules* in an escutcheon argent. And we are not to doubt but that this was *the new heraldry* alluded

* Ante, p. 340. 343, 344.

to by our author; by which he insinuates, *that some then created had hands indeed, but not hearts; that is, money to pay for the creation, but no virtue to purchase the honour.*"

Such is the observation of this critick. But by what chymistry can the sense which he has affixed to this passage be extracted from it? Or is it probable, that Shakspeare, who has more than once condescended to be the encomiast of the unworthy founder of the order of Baronets, who had been personally honoured by a letter from his Majesty, and substantially benefited by the royal licence granted to him and his fellow-comedians, should have been so impolitick as to satirize the king, or to depreciate his new-created dignity?

These lines appear to me to afford an obvious meaning, without supposing them to contain such a multitude of allusions:

Of old (says Othello) in matrimonial alliances, the heart dictated the union of hands; but our modern junctions are those of hands, not of hearts.

On every marriage the arms of the wife are united to those of the husband. This circumstance, I believe, it was, suggested *heraldry*, in this place, to our author. I know not whether a heart was ever used as an armorial ensign*, nor is it, I conceive, for this interpretation, necessary to inquire. It was the office of the herald to *join*, or, to speak technically, to

* It is, in the arms of Douglas.

quarter the arms of the new-married pair *. Hence, with his usual licence, Shakspeare uses *heraldry* for *junction*, or *union* in general. Thus, in his *Rape of Lucrece*, the same term is employed to denote that *union* of colours which constitutes a beautiful complexion :

“ This *heraldry* in Lucrece’ face was seen,
 “ Argued by beauty’s red, and virtue’s white.”

This passage not affording us any assistance, we are next to consider one in *The Alchymist*, by Ben Jonson, which, if it alluded to an incident in *Othello* (as Mr. Steevens seems to think it does), would ascertain this play to have appeared before 1610, in which year *The Alchymist* was first acted :

“ *Lovewit*. Didst thou hear a cry, say’st thou ?
 “ *Neighb.* Yes, Sir, like unto a man that had been
 strangled an hour, and could not speak.”

But I doubt whether *Othello* was here in Jonson’s contemplation. Old Ben generally spoke out ; and if he had intended to sneer at the manner of Desdemona’s death, I think, he would have taken care that his meaning should not be miss’d, and would have written — “ like unto a *woman*,” &c.

This tragedy was not entered on the books of the

* “ I may *quarter*, coz,” says *Slender*, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. “ You may (replies justice Shallow) by *marrying*.”

Stationers-

Stationers-Company till October 6, 1621, nor printed till the following year; but it was acted at court early in the year 1613*. How long before that time it had appeared, I have not been able to ascertain, either from the play itself, or from any contemporary production. I have, however, persuaded myself that it was one of Shakspeare's latest performances: a supposition, to which the acknowledged excellence of the piece gives some degree of probability. It is here attributed to the year 1611, because Dr. Warburton's comment on the passage above-cited may convince others, though I confess, it does not satisfy me.

Emilia and Lodovico, two of the characters in this play, are likewise two of the persons represented in *May-Day*, a comedy by Chapman, first printed in 1611.

35. *THE TEMPEST*, 1612.

Though some account of the Bermuda-Islands, which are mentioned in this play, had been published in 1600 (as Dr. Farmer has observed), yet as they were not generally known till Sir George Somers arrived there in 1609, *The Tempest* may be fairly attributed to a period subsequent to that year; especially as it exhibits such strong internal marks of having been a late production.

The entry at Stationers-Hall does not contribute to ascertain the time of its composition; for it appears not

* MS. Vertue.

on the Stationers' books, nor was it printed till 1623, when it was published with the rest of our author's plays in folio : in which edition, having, I suppose, by mere accident, obtained the first place, it has ever since preserved a station to which indubitably it is not entitled.

As the circumstance from which this piece receives its title, is at an end in the very first scene, and as many other titles, all equally proper, might have occurred to Shakspeare (such as *The Enchanted-Island—The Banished Duke—Ferdinand and Miranda, &c.*) it is possible, that some particular and recent event determined him to call it *The Tempest*. It appears from Stowe's *Chronicle*, p. 913, that in the October, November, and December of the year 1612, a dreadful tempest happened in England, "*which did exceeding great damage, with extreame shipwrack throughout the ocean.*" "*There perished (says the historian) above an hundred ships in the space of two houres.*"—Several pamphlets were published on this occasion, decorated with prints of sinking vessels, *castles topling on their warder's heads*, the devil overturning steeples, &c. In one of them, the author, describing the appearance of the waves at Dover, says, "*the whole seas appeared like a fiery world, all sparkling red.*" Another of these narratives recounts the escape of Edmond Pet, a sailor ; whose preservation appears to have been no less marvellous than that of Trinculo or Stephano : and so great a terror did this tempest create in the minds of the people, that a form of prayer was
ordered

ordered on the occasion, which is annexed to one of the publications above mentioned.

There is reason to believe that some of our author's dramas obtained their names from the seasons at which they were produced. It is not very easy to account for the title of *Twelfth Night*, but by supposing it to have been first exhibited in the Christmas holidays*. Neither the title of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, nor that of *The Winter's Tale*, denotes the season of the action; the events which are the subject of the latter, occurring at the time of sheep-shearing, and the dream, from which the former receives its name, happening on the night preceding May-day.—These titles, therefore, were probably suggested by the season at which the plays were exhibited, to which they belong; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, having, we may presume, been first represented in June, and *The Winter's Tale* in December.

* It was formerly an established custom to have plays represented at court in the Christmas holidays, and particularly on *Twelfth Night*. Two of Lilly's comedies (*Alexander and Campaspe*, 1591—and *Mydas*, 1592) are said, in their title-pages, to have been *played before the queenes majestie on Twelfth-day at night*; and several of Ben Jonson's masques were presented at White-Hall, on the same festival. Our author's *Love's Labour Lost* was exhibited before queen Elizabeth in the Christmas holidays; and his *King Lear* was acted before king James on St. Stephen's night (the night after Christmas-day).

Perhaps,

Perhaps, then, it may not be thought a very improbable conjecture, that this comedy was written in the summer of 1612, and produced on the stage in the latter-end of that year; and that the author availed himself of a circumstance then fresh in the minds of his audience, by affixing a title to it, which was more likely to excite curiosity than any other that he could have chosen, while at the same time it was sufficiently justified by the subject of the drama.

Mr. Steevens, in his observations on this play, has quoted from the tragedy of *Darius* by the earl of Sterline, first printed in 1603, some lines * so strongly resembling

- * “ Let greatness of her glassy sceptres vaunt,
 “ Not sceptres, no but reeds, soon bruis'd, soon broken,
 “ And let this worldly pomp our wits enchant,
 “ *All fades, and scarcely leaves behind a token.*
 “ Those golden *palaces*, those gorgeous halls,
 “ With furniture superfluously fair,
 “ Those stately courts, those *sky-encount'ring* walls,
 “ *Evanish all like vapours in the air.*”

Darius, Act III. Ed. 1603.

- “ These our actors,
 “ As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
 “ *Are melted into air, into thin air;*
 “ And, like the baseless fabrick of this vision,
 “ The *cloud-capt* tow'rs, the gorgeous *palaces*,
 “ The solemn temples, the great globe itself,

M m

“ Yea

resembling a celebrated passage in *The Tempest*, that one author must, I apprehend, have been indebted to the other. Shakspeare, I imagine, borrowed from lord Sterline*.

Mr. Holt conjectured †, that the masque in the fifth act of this comedy was intended by the poet as a compliment to the Earl of Essex, on his being united in wedlock, in 1611, to lady Frances Howard, to whom he had been contracted some years before ‡. However this might have been, the date, which that commentator has assigned to this play (1614), is certainly too late; for it appears from the MSS. of Mr. Vertue, that the *Tempest* was acted by John Heminge

“ Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 “ And like this unsubstantial pageant *faded*,
 “ *Leave not a rack behind.*”

Tempest, Act IV. Sc. i.

Whether we suppose Shakspeare to have imitated lord Sterline, or lord Sterline to have borrowed from him, the fourth line above quoted from the tragedy of *Darius* renders it highly probable that Shakspeare wrote,

“ Leave not a *track* behind.”

* See a note on *Julius Cæsar*, Act I. Sc. i.

† Observations on the *Tempest*, p. 67. Mr. Holt imagined, that lord Essex was united to lady Frances Howard in 1610; but he was mistaken; their union did not take place till the next year.

‡ Jan. 5, 1606—7. The earl continued abroad four years from that time; so that he did not cohabit with his wife till 1611.

and

and the rest of the King's Company, before prince Charles, the lady Elizabeth, and the prince Palatine elector, in the beginning of the year 1613.

The names of *Trinculo* and *Antonio*, two of the characters in this comedy, are likewise found in that of *Albumazar*; which was first printed in 1614, but is supposed by Dryden to have appeared some years before.

36. *TWELFTH NIGHT*, 1614.

It has been generally believed, that Shakspeare retired from the theatre, and ceased to write, about three years before he died. The latter supposition must now be considered as extremely doubtful; for Mr. Tyrwhitt, with great probability, conjectures, that *Twelfth Night* was written in 1614: grounding his opinion on an allusion*, which it seems to contain, to those parliamentary *undertakers*, of whom frequent mention is made in the Journals of the House of Commons for that year †; who were stigmatized with this invidious name, on account of their having *undertaken* to manage the elections of knights and burgesses, in such a manner as to secure a majority in parliament for the court. If this allusion was intended, *Twelfth*

* “Nay, if you be an *undertaker*, I am for you.” See *Twelfth Night*, Act IV. Sc. iii. and the note there.

† Comm. Journ. Vol. I. p. 456, 457, 470.

Night was probably our author's last production; and, we may presume, was written after he had retired to Stratford. It is observable, that Mr. Ashley, a member of the House of Commons, in one of the debates on this subject, says, "that the rumour concerning these *undertakers* had spread into the country."

When Shakspeare quitted London and his profession, for the tranquillity of a rural retirement, it is improbable that such an excursive genius should have been immediately reconciled to a state of mental inactivity. It is more natural to conceive, that he should have occasionally bent his thoughts towards the theatre, which his muse had supported, and the interest of his associates whom he had left behind him, to struggle with the capricious vicissitudes of publick taste, and whom, his last Will shews us, he had not forgotten. To the necessity, therefore, of literary amusement to every cultivated mind, or to the dictates of friendship, or to both these incentives, we are, perhaps, indebted for the comedy of *Twelfth Night*; which bears evident marks of having been composed at leisure, as most of the characters that it contains are finished to a higher degree of dramattick perfection, than is discoverable in some of our author's earlier comick performances *.

* The comedies particularly alluded to are, *Love's Labour Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Comedy of Errors*.

In the third act of this comedy, *Decker's Westward Hoe* seems to be alluded to. *Westward Hoe* was printed in 1607, and, from the prologue to *Eastward Hoe*, appears to have been acted in 1604, or before.

Maria, in *Twelfth Night*, speaking of Malvolio, says, "he does smile his face into more lines than the new map with the augmentation of the Indies." I have not been able to learn the date of the map here alluded to; but, as it is spoken of as a recent publication, it may, when discovered, serve to ascertain the date of this play more exactly.

The comedy of *What You Will* (the second title of the play now before us), which was entered at Stationers-Hall, August 9, 1607, was probably Marston's play, as it was printed in that year; and it appears to have been the general practice of the booksellers at that time, recently before publication, to enter those plays of which they had procured copies.

Twelfth Night was not entered on the Stationers' books, nor printed, till 1623.

It has been thought, that Ben Jonson intended to ridicule the conduct of this play, in his *Every Man out of his Humour*, at the end of Act III. Sc. vi. where he makes Mitis say,—“That the argument of his comedy might have been of some other nature, as of a duke to be in love with a countess, and that countess to be in love with the duke's son, and the son in love with the lady's waiting-maid; some such cross

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wooin g,

wooing, with a clown to their serving-man, better than be thus near and familiarly allied to the time *.

I doubt, however, whether Jonson had here *Twelfth Night* in contemplation. If an allusion to this comedy were intended, it would ascertain it to have been written before 1599, when *Every Man out of his Humour* was first acted. But Meres does not mention *Twelfth Night* in 1598; nor is there any reason to believe that it then existed.

IF the dates here assigned to our author's plays should not, in every instance, carry with them conviction of their propriety, let it be remembered, that this is a subject on which conviction cannot at this day be obtained; and that the observations, now submitted to the publick, do not pretend to any higher title than that of "AN ATTEMPT to ascertain the chronology of the dramas of Shakspeare."

Should the errors and deficiencies of this essay invite others to deeper and more successful researches, the end proposed by it will be attained: and he who offers the present arrangement of Shakspeare's dramas will be happy to transfer the slender portion of credit, that may result from the novelty of his undertaking, to some future claimant, who may be supplied with ampler materials, and endued with a superior degree of antiquarian sagacity.

* See the first note on *Twelfth Night*, Act I. Sc. i.

To some, he is not unapprized, this inquiry will appear a tedious and barren speculation. But there are many, it is hoped, who think nothing that relates to the brightest ornament of the English nation, wholly uninteresting; who will be gratified by observing, how the genius of our great poet gradually expanded itself, till, like his own Ariel, *it flamed amazement* in every quarter, blazing forth with a lustre that has not hitherto been equalled, and perhaps will never be surpassed.

MALONE.

A LIST

A L I S T
O F
A N C I E N T T R A N S L A T I O N S
F R O M
C L A S S I C K A U T H O R S.

H O M E R.

- T E N Bookes of the Iliades into English out of French,*
by ARTHUR HALL, Esq. London, imprinted by
Ralph Newberie, 4to * ————— 1581
- The Shield of Achilles, from the 18th Book of Homer,*
by GEORGE CHAPMAN, 4to. London 1596

* In the first volume of the books of entries belonging to the Stationers-Company is the following:

“*Henry Bynneman.*] Nov. 1580, lycensed unto him under the wardens’ hands tenne bookes of the Iliades of Homer.” Again, Nov. 14, 1608, “Seven bookes of Homer’s Iliades translated into English by Geo. Chapman.” Again, April 8, 1611, “A booke called Homer’s Iliades in Englishe, containing 24 Bookes.” Again, Nov. 2, 1614, Homer’s Odisses, 24 bookes, translated by George Chapman.”

Seven

Seven Books of the Iliades, by ditto, 4to*. Lond. 1596

Ditto ————— 1598

Fifteen Books of Ditto, thin folio ——— 1600

The whole Works of Homer, by ditto, printed for Nath.

Butter. An anonymous correspondent informs me

that he has in his possession “a volume containing

twelve Books of the Iliad by Chapman; and after

them some Sonnets; but the title-page is so muti-

lated, that neither the date nor printer’s name re-

main” ————— no date.

The Crowne of all Homer’s Works, Batrachomymachia,

&c. thin folio, printed by John Bill no date †.

The Strange, Wonderfull, and Bloudy Battell between Frogs

and Mise; paraphrastically done into English He-

roycall Verse, by W. F. (*i. e.* WILLIAM FOWLDES)

4to. ————— 1603

HESIOD.

The Georgics of Hesiod, by G. CHAPMAN, 4to. 1618

MUSÆUS.

Marloe’s Hero and Leander, with the first Book of

Lucan, 4to. ————— 1600

* Meres, in his *Second part of Wit’s Commonwealth*, 1598, says, that *Chapman* is “of good note for his inchoate *Homer*.”

† In the first volume of the entries of the Stationers-Company is the following:

“*T. Purfoote*.] The Battell of the Frogges and Myce, and certain orations of Isocrates. Jan. 4th, 1579.”

There

- There must have been a former Edition**, as a second Part
 was published by Henry Petowe — 1598
Musæus's Poem of Hero and Leander, imitated by CHRIS-
 TOPHER MARLOW, and finished by GEORGE
 CHAPMAN, 8vo. London — 1606

EURIPIDES.

- Jocasta*, a Tragedy, from the Phœnissa of Euripides,
 by GEORGE GASCOIGNE, and Mr. FRANCIS
 KINWELMERSHE, 4to. London — 1556

* This translation, or at least Marlow's part in it, must have been published before 1599, being twice mentioned in Nash's *Lenten Stuff*, &c. which bears that date. "*Leander and Hero*, of whom divine *Musæus* sung, and a diviner muse than him, *Kit Marlow*." Again, "She sprung after him, and so resigned up her priesthood, and left worke for *Musæus* and *Kit Marlow*."

Among the entries at Stationers-Hall I find the following made by John Wolfe in 1593, Sept. 8th, "A booke entitled *Hero and Leander*, being an amorous poem devised by Christopher Marlow."

At the same time, "Lucan's first booke of the famous *Cyvill Warr betwixt Pompey and Cæsar*. Englished by Christopher Marlow."

Again, in 1597, "A booke in English called *Hero and Leander*."

Again, April 1598, "The seconde Part of *Hero and Leander*, by Henry Petowe." Andrew Harris entered it.

Again, in 1600, "*Hero and Leander* by Marlowe."

In 1614 an entire translation of Lucan was published by Sir Arthur Gorges, and entered as such on the same books.

PLATO.

PLATO.

Axiochus, a Dialogue, attributed to Plato, by EDMUND SPENSER, 4to. * ————— 1592

DEMOSTHENES.

The Three Orations of Demosthenes, chiefe Orator among the Grecians, in Favour of the Olynthians, with those his fower against Philip of Macedon, &c. by THOMAS WYLLSON, Doctor of the Civill Lawes, 4to. 1570

ISOCRATES.

Isocrates's sage Admonition to Demonicus, by R. NUTTHALL, 8vo. London 1557, 12mo. and 1585

Isocrates's Doctrinal of Princes, by SYR THOMAS ELLIOT, London, 8vo. ————— 1534

Isocrates's Orations, entitled Evagoras, by JEREMIAH WOLFE, 8vo. — ————— 1581

Three Orations of moral Instructions, one to Demonicus, and two to Nicocles, King of Salamis, translated from Isocrates, by THOMAS FORREST, 4to. 1580

LUCIAN.

Necromantia, a Dialog of the Poete Lucyen between Menippus and Philonides, for his Fantesye faynyd for a mery Pastyme, in English Verse and Latin Prose.

* This book was entered in May 1592, at Stationers-Hall.

Toxaris,

Toxaris, or the Friendship of Lucian, by A. O. Lond.
8vo. ————— 1565

HERODOTUS.

The Famous Hystory of Herodotus *, in nine Bookes, &c.
by B. R. London ————— 1584

N. B. *This Piece contains only the two first Books, viz. the Clio and Euterpe. The Translator says in his Preface, "As these speede, so the rest will follow. 4to.*

THUCYDIDES.

The Hystory writtome by Thucydides, &c. translated out of the Frenche of Claude de Seyssell, Bishop of Marseilles, into the Englishe language, by THO. NICOLLS, Citizeine and Goldsmyth of London, fol. 1550†.

POLYBIUS.

Hystories of the most famous and worthy Cronographer, Polybius, by CHRISTOPHER WATSON, 8vo. 1568
This Work consists of extracts only.

* Among the entries in the books at Stationers-Hall this appears to be one.

"*John Denham.*] The famous Historie of Herodotus in Englyshe, June 13, 1581."

† On the Stationers' books in 1607 either this or some other translation is entered, called "The History of Thucydides the Athenian, translated into English."

DIODORUS

DIODORUS SICULUS*.

The Hystory of the Successors of Alexander, &c. out of
Diodorus Siculus and Plutarch, by THOMAS
STOCKER. London, 4to. — 1569

APPIAN.

An aunciente Historie, &c. by Appian† of Alexandria,
translated out of diverse Languages, &c. by W. B.
4to. London — 1578

JOSEPHUS.

Josephus's History, &c. translated into English, by
THOMAS LODGE, fol. London, 1602—1609, &c.

ÆLIAN.

Ælian's Registre of Hystories, by ABRAHAM FLEMING,
4to. — — 1576

* Caxton tells us, that “Skelton had translated *Diodorus Siculus*, the *Epistles of Tulle*, and diverse other Workes;” but I know not that they were ever printed.

† In the first volume of the entries in the books of the Stationers-Company, Feb. 5, 1577, is the following:

“*Henry Binneman.*] Appianus Alexandrinus of the Romaine Civill Warres.”

N n

HERODIAN.

HERODIAN.

The Historie of Herodian, &c. translated oute of Greeke into Latin, by ANGELUS POLITIANUS, and out of Latin into Englyshe, by NICH. SMYTH. Imprinted at London, by William Coplande, 4to*.

PLUTARCH.

Plutarch's Lives†, by Sir THOMAS NORTH, from the French of Amyot, Bishop of Auxerre, fol.

1579, 1602, 1603

Plutarch's Morals, by Dr. PHILEMON HOLLAND,

1603‡

Plutarch of the Education of Children, by Sir THOMAS ELYOTT, 4to.

The Preceptes of that excellent Clerke and grave Philosopher Plutarcke, for the Preservation of Health, 8vo.

1543

* Oct. 1591, *Herodian in English* was entered at Stationers-Hall by ——— Adams.

† Thus entered in the books of the Stationers-Company :
“ April 1579—Vantrouller—Wright, a booke in Englishe called Plutarch's Lyves.”

‡ On the Stationers' books in the year 1600 is the following entry :

“ A booke to be translated out of Frenche into Englishe, and so printed, called the Morall Woorkes of Plutarque.”
Again in 1602. Again in the same year, “ The morral worke of Plutarque, being translated out of French into English.”

ARISTOTLE.

ARISTOTLE.

The Ethiques of Aristotle, &c. by JOHN WYLKINSON.

Printed by Grafton, Printer to King Edward VI.

8vo. B. L. ————— 1547*

The Secrete of Secretes of Aristotle, &c. translated out of the Frenche, &c. London, 8vo. 1528

Aristotle's Politiques, &c†. from the French, by J. D. fol. London ————— 1598

XENOPHON.

The eight Bookes of Xenophon, containing the Institution, Schole, and Education of Cyrus, the noble King of Persye, &c. translated out of Greek into English, by Mr. W. BERCHER, London, 12mo. 1567 & 1569

Ditto, by Dr. PHILEMON HOLLAND.

Xenophon's Treatise of House-hold right, connyngly translated out of the Greke tongue, &c. by GENTIAN HERVET, &c. 8vo. Lond. 1532, 8vo. 1534, 1544, 8vo. 1573.

* Of the *Ethicks of Aristotle* some more early translation must have appeared; as Sir Tho. Elyot in his *Boke named the Governour*, 1537, says, "they are to be learned in Greke; for the translations that we have, be but a rude and grosse shadowe of the eloquence and wysdome of Aristotle."

† This translation is entered in the books at Stationers-Hall.

"*Adam Islip.*] *Aristotle's Politiques* with expositions; to be translated into Englyshe by the Frenche copie, 1598."

The Arte of Riding from Xenophon, &c. Lond. 4to. 1584

EPICTETUS*.

The Manuell of Epiſtetus, translated out of Greeke into French, and now into English, &c. Also the Apothegmes, &c. by JAMES SANDFORD. London, 12mo. — — 1567

EUNAPIUS SARDIANUS†.

The Lyves of Philosophers and Orators, from the Greek of Eunapius, 4to. — 1579

ACHILLES STATIUS.

The most delectable and pleasant History of Clitophon and Lucippe, from the Greek of Achilles Statius, &c. by W. B. 4to. — 1597 ‡

* In the books of the Stationers-Company, Feb. 12, 1581, Tho. Easte entered Enchiridion in English.

† Thus entered in the books of the Stationers-Company. “*Richard Jones.*] The Lives of divers excellent Orators and Philosophers written in Greeke by Enapius of the city of Sardis in Lydia, and translated into Englishe by —.”

‡ This book was entered in the same year by Thomas Creede, on the books of the Stationers-Company.

M. ANTO-

M. ANTONINUS*.

The Golden Boke of Marcus Aurelius, Emperour and eloquent Orator, 12mo. London ——— 1553

Translated out of French into English, by Sir JOHN BOURCHIER, Knt. &c. &c.

Other editions of this are in 1534, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1559, 1586, 1588.

DIONYSIUS.

Dionysius's Description of the Worlde. Englyshed by THOMAS TWINE, 8vo. London ——— 1572

EUCLID.

Euclid's Elements of Geometry, translated into English by RICH. CANDISH, who flourished A. D. 1556

Euclid's Elements, Preface by JOHN DEE, Lond. 1570

HIPPOCRATES.

The Aphorismes of Hippocrates, redacted into a certaine Order, and translated by HUMFRIE LLHYD, 8vo. 1585

* This book is only introduced, that an opportunity may be obtained of excluding it from any future catalogue of translated classicks. It was a fraud of Guevara's. See his article in Bayle. Our countryman Elyott did somewhat of the same kind. He pretended to translate the Actes and Sentences notable, of the Emperor *Alexander Severus* (from the Greek of Encolpius). See *Fabricius'* and *Tanner's Bibliothec.* &c.

N n i i j

GALEN.

GALEN.

- Galen's Two Books of Elements*, translated into English
by J. JONES, 4to. London ——— 1574
Third and fourth Books by G. BAKER, 4to. 1579
Certaine Workes of Galen, englyshed by THO. GALE,
4to. ——— 1586

HELIODORUS.

- The Beginning of Æthiopical History in English Hexameters*,
by ABRAHAM FRAUNCE, 8vo. London 1591 *
Heliodorus's Æthiopic History, transl. by THO. UNDER-
DOWN, B. L. 4to. London 1577 and 1587

VIRGIL.

- The Boke of Eneydos, &c.* by CAXTON, fol. London,
prose ——— 1490
The thirteen Bukes of Eneados in Scottish Metir, by GA-
WAIN DOUGLAS, 4to. London — 1553
Certain Bookes of Virgile's Æneis † turned into English
Metir, by the right honourable Lorde HENRY
Earle of Surrey, 4to. London — 1557

* A translation of the same book is likewise entered at Stationers-Hall, 1602, and again twice in 1604, for different Printers.

† This is a translation of the second and fourth books into blank verse, and is perhaps the oldest specimen of that metre in the English language.

The

The first seven Bookes of the Eneidos, by PHAER, Lond.
4to. B. L. ————— 1558

This Translation is in rhyme of fourteen syllables.

The nyne first Bookes, &c. by PHAER, 4to. Lond. 1562

The thirteene Bookes of Eneidos, by PHAER and TWYNE,
4to. London 1584, 1596, 1607, &c*.

The first foure Bookes of Virgil's Æneis, translated into
English heroic Verse, by RICHARD STANYHURST,
&c. 12mo †. London ————— 1583

The Bucolickes of Publius Virgilius Maro, &c. by ABRA-
HAM FLEMING, drawn into plaine and familiar
Englyshe, Verse for Verse, 4to. B. L. 1575

Virgil's Eclogues and Georgicks, translated into blank
Verse, by the same Author, London 1589

The Lamentation of Corydon for the Love of Alexis, Verse
for Verse, out of Latine.

*This is translated into English Hexameters, and printed at
the end of the Countesse of Pembroke's Iyychurch, 1591.*

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* Among the entries in the books of the Stationers-Com-
pany, is the following. “*Tho. Creede.*] Virgil's Æneidos
in Englishe verse, 1595.” Again in 1600. Again his
Bucolicks and Georgicks in the same year.

† The copy, which I have seen, was in 4to. printed at
Leyden, and was entered as such on the books of the Sta-
tioners, on the 24th of January 1582.

HORACE.

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*Two Bookes of Horace his Satyres Englyshed, accordyng
to the Prescription of St. Hierome, 4to. B. L. Lond.*
1566

Horace his Arte of Poetrie, Pistles, and Satyrs Englished,
by THOMAS DRANT, 4to. London* 1567

OVID.

*The fyfteene Bookes of Metamorphoseos. In which ben
contaynid the Fables of Ovid, by WILLIAM CAX-
TON, Westminster, folio* 1480

*The four first Books of Ovid, translated from the Latin
into English Meetre, by ARTHUR GOLDING,
Gent. 4to. B. L. London* — 1565

*The fyfteene Bookes of P. Ovidius Naso, &c. by ARTHUR
GOLDING, 4to. Bl. L. London* 1576

*Another in 1575, according to Ames, and another ear-
lier than either in 1567, if we may believe the Date of
the Dedication.*

[*A former Edition was in 1572, in Rawlinson's Catalogue.*]

Ditto — 1587. Do. 1612.

*The pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis. 8vo.
London* — 1565

*The Fable of Ovid treating of Narcissus, translated out
of Latin into English Mytre, with a Moral there-
unto very plesante to rede, 4to. London* 1560

* There is an entry at Stationers-Hall of the Epistles of
Horace in 1591.

The

The Heroycall Epistles, &c. set out and translated by
GEORGE TURBERVILLE, Gent. &c. B. L. 4to.
London * — 1567, 1569, and 1600

The three first Bookes of Ovid de Tristibus, translated into
English, by THO. CHURCHYARD, 4to. London
1580 †

Ovid his Invective against Ibis, translated into English
Meeter, &c. 12mo. London — 1569 †

And 1577, by THOMAS UNDERWOOD.

Certaine of Ovid's Elegies, by C. MARLOW §, 12mo.
At Middleburgh — no date.

All Ovid's Elegies, three Bookes, by C. M. At Middle-
burgh, 12mo. Somewhat larger than the preceding
edition. *Ovidius Naso, his Remedy of Love*, tran-
slated and entituled to the youth of England, 4to.
London — — 1600

* Among the Stationers' entries I find, in 1594, "A booke entituled *Oenone and Paris*, wherein is described the extremity of love, &c." This may be a translation from Ovid.

† This book was entered at Stationers-Hall by Thomas Easte, July 1, 1577, and by Thomas Orwin in 1591.

‡ Among the entries in the books of the Stationers-Company is the following. "*Henry Bynneman.*"] July 1, 1577, Ovid's Invective against Ibis. Bought of Thomas Easte."

§ In the forty-first of Q. Elizabeth, these translations from Ovid were commanded, by the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, to be burnt at Stationers-Hall.

Salmacis

Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, by FRANCIS BEAUMONT, 4to. ————— 1602

He likewise translated a Part of the Remedy of Love.
There was another Translation of the whole, by Sir
 THOMAS OVERBURY, 8vo. without date*.

PLAUTUS.

Menæchmi, by W. W. London †.

MARTIAL. 1597

Flowers of Epigrams (from Martial particularly) by
 TIM. KENDALL, 8vo ‡. 1577

TERENCE.

Terens in Englysh, or the Translacyon out of Latin into
Englysh of the first Comedy of Tyrens callyd Andria,
 Supposed to be printed by J. Rastell §

Andria,

* On the books of the Stationers-Company, Dec. 23, 1599, is entered "Ovidius Naso his Remedy of Love." Again, in the same year, "Ovydes Epistles in Englyshe," and "Ovydes Metamorphosis in Englyshe."

† This piece was entered at Stationers-Hall, June 10, 1594. In 1520, viz. the 11th year of Henry VIII. it appears from Holinshed, that a comedy of Plautus was played before the king.

‡ Entered at Stationers-Hall, Feb. 1576.

§ As the following metrical introduction to this play relates chiefly to the improvements at that time supposed to

*Andria, the first Comedy of Terence, by MAURICE
KYFFIN, 4to.* —————

1588

Terence

to have been made in the English language, I could not prevail on myself to suppress it.

The Poet.

The famous renown through the worlde is sprong
Of poetys ornate that usyd to indyte
Of dyvers matters in theyr moder tong
Some toke uppon them translacyons to wryte
Some to compyle bokys for theyr delyte
But in our English tong for to speke playn
I rede but of few have take any gret payn.

Except master Gowre which furst began
And of moralite wrote ryght craftely
Than master Chaucer that excellent man
Which wrote as compendious as elyantly
As in any other tong ever dyd any
Ludgate also which adournyd our tong
Whose noble famys through the world be sprong.

By these men our tong is amplyfyed so
That we therin now translate as well may
As in eny other tongis other can do
Yet the Greke tong and Laten dyvers men say
Have many wordys can not be Englyshid this day
So lyke wyse in Englysh many wordys do habound
That no Greke nor Laten for them can be found.

And

Terence in English, by RICHARD BERNARD, 4to.
Cambridge *. ————— 1598

And the cause that our tong is so plenteouse now
For we kepe our Englysh contynually
And of other tongis many wordis we borow
Which now for Englysh we use and occupy
These thingis have gyven corage gretly
To dyvers and specyally now of late
To them that this comedy have translate.

Which all discrete men now do besech
And specyally lernyd men to take no dysdayn
Though this be compylyd in our vulgare spech
Yet lernyng thereby some men may attayn
For they that in this comedy have take payn
Pray you to correct where faut shal be found
And of our matter so here is the ground.

In the metrical peroration to this piece, is the following stanza :

Wherefore the translatours now require you this
Yf ought be amyss ye wold consyder
The Englysh almost as short as the Latten is
And still to kepe ryme a diffycult matter
To make the sentence opynly to appere
Which if it had a long expocysion
Then were it a comment and no translacyon.

* At Stationers-Hall in 1597, "the second comedy of Terence, called *Eunuchus*," was entered by W. Leake; and the first and second comedie in 1600.

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